

Egypt in the reign of Muhammad Ali

AFAF LUTFI AL-SAYYID MARSOT

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To AGM with love

Preface

This work is an attempt to write the history of Egypt from 1805 to 1848, when the country was ruled by Muhammad Ali. There have been countless works written throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries on that period, but no major work has appeared since 1961. In the light of recent developments in scholarship in the last ten years, I have undertaken this work as a means of opening research once again into that period of history, for, while many books deal with the period, few of them deal with it properly or even adequately. Many of them were written either by supporters of the Egyptian royal family (indeed many were commissioned by Egyptian rulers) or by detractors, so that we do not possess an unbiased record of the age; neither is there much on the economic and social aspects of that period of Egyptian history. That is why I call my work 'an attempt', for we need a generation or more of researchers producing various monographs on different aspects before we can claim to know the period. If one may level a major point of criticism against most of the works of the past on the Muhammad Ali period, it is that they were written without consulting the Egyptian archives, except for the pioneering work of a handful of scholars, among whom are M. Sabry, M. Fahmi, A. A. al-Giritly and A. Rustum. I have tried to remedy that defect in a minor fashion, for the Egyptian archives are an untapped gold-mine of information. There are 36,000 dossiers dealing with the period, only one of which has been catalogued, and there are several more *sijillat* dealing with land tenure and finances, whose accounts and figures have not been deciphered or, when they were deciphered, their conclusions were rejected in favour of material deriving from some foreign source that was judged more reliable, when in fact it was not. Even more, we need to learn about eighteenth-century Egypt before we can come to valid conclusions about the situation in early nineteenth-century Egypt. André Raymond has shown the way with his magnificent two-volume study of Cairo, but we need more such research before we can handle the mamluk period adequately.

When all the background work is done perhaps some of my claims

Preface

will be contradicted, and perhaps they will be further substantiated, for we each owe a debt to the work of our predecessors, even when we criticize them. We all stand on each other's shoulders, an uncomfortable position at best.

I have not touched on the administration of the country in great detail, as this has been mentioned in a number of works, notable among which is Deny's monumental work; neither have I gone into any detail on the educational system and the foreign missions sent abroad, for which information the reader can go to Heyworth-Dunne and Ahmad Izzat Abd al-Karim; nor with the system of land tenure, save in so far as it concerns major political trends, for that has been admirably covered by al-Hitta and Barakat. What I have done is to analyse the history of Egypt during the Muhammad Ali period, to account for the cause and effect of events and trace them back to an earlier period and to an economic and financial base in order to understand why certain steps were taken.

The research for this work was carried out in the archives of Egypt, England and France. In Egypt my work took me to Dar al-Wathaiq al-Misriyya. I consulted a few of the *sijillat* but barely scratched the surface, for it would need several generations of researchers to go through the material in an exhaustive fashion. The rest of my material came from a variety of boxes containing loose sheets, letters, orders and communications of various kinds, translations of parts of *sijillat* which had been used by previous researchers and left together as one lot. For instance, the material used by Professor Asad Rustum for his corpus of materials dealing with the Syrian campaign are kept in their entirety as one unit, as is much of the material dealing with the campaigns in the Sudan, the Hijaz and the Morea. Some of the boxes contain letters from Muhammad Ali to various members of his family and from them to him. Delving into these boxes and *sijillat* is both a delight and a source of frustration: a delight because so much new material comes to light, and a frustration because too much material needs to be catalogued and indexed before it can be used. Some of the material is in Turkish, although all Turkish items were translated into Arabic and recorded before they were despatched. The dossiers bear different headings depending on the administration they derived from, thus Bahr Barra dealt with foreign affairs, Maiyya Turki and Maiyya Arabi dealt with the pasha's entourage and acted as the executive branch of the bureaucracy, Fabrikat dealt with the industries, and so on. While the dossiers are written in various legible scripts, those dealing with land tenure are written in *qirna*, which is more troublesome to read. I have not personally consulted the land records, but have relied on the works of

my colleagues who have: amongst others, Professors al-Hitta, Barakat and Abd al-Rahim. Because of a fire in 1822 in the building that housed the archives, we have little material prior to that time, which explains why researchers have had to rely on secondary sources such as Jabarti, Turc, the *Description de l'Egypte* and the archives of European governments.

I am grateful to the Academic Senate of the University of California, Los Angeles, for several senate grants; to the Social Science Research Council and to the American Research Center in Egypt whose generous grants allowed me to pursue my research in Egypt, England and France. I am also grateful to the American University in Cairo which contributed to my support for six months while in Cairo by naming me a Distinguished Visiting Professor. In Cairo I owe a debt of gratitude to His Excellency Dr Sheniti, the former Under-Secretary of Cultural Affairs, for his permission to use the materials. I am also indebted to the then Director of the Archives, Jubran Jubran, and to the employees of the Dar, especially to Sawsan Abd al-Ghani and Ibrahim Fathallah Ahmad for their kindness and assistance. My thanks also go to the Public Record Office in London and to the Quai d'Orsay in Paris for permission to use their materials.

I am deeply grateful to my friends and colleagues Dr Rifaat Abul Hajj, Albert Hourani and Roger Owen for their generosity in reading and commenting on my manuscript, and to my student Kenneth Cuno for his criticisms and insight; their comments have immeasurably improved the final draft. I am indebted to Julia Clancy Smith who laboured with notes, glossary and indexing.

As to my family who suffered through the years while the book was written, I can only offer my love and deep gratitude for their forbearance and for their unflagging support.

Note on transliteration

The problem of transliteration always arises in a work which deals with Arabic and Turkish as well as western sources. For the reader's convenience and my own sanity I have tried to simplify transliteration as much as possible. All names of Egyptians whether of Turkish or Arabic origin have been transliterated in the Arabic fashion. Mehmet Aly is thus referred to throughout as Muhammad Ali, unless a quotation used an alternative transliteration. Some names have been spelt in a manner calculated to stress the Egyptian pronunciation, e.g. Giza and Girga. Turkish spelling has been retained for purely Ottoman references. All diacritics have been omitted, as in Said, Upper Egypt.

Note on money, weights and measures

dollar U.S.: exchange rate varied from 12.6 piastres in the 1820s to

16-17 piastres in the 1830s to 20 piastres in the 1840s

franc: exchange rate varied between 1 to 4 piastres from 1812 to 1840

kis (purse): 20,000 paras, or 500 piastres

para: the smallest silver denomination

riyal: 2 piastres and 10 paras, or 50 paras

piastre (abbrev. pt./pts.): 40 paras

pound sterling: approx. 100 piastres

ardab: 191.69 litres or 5.44 imperial bushels

bahar: 11.8 kilograms or 222 lb 6 oz

dirhem: 3.12 grams

faddan: varied between 1,000 and 1,333 square metres

kila: 7.58 kilograms or 16.72 lb

oke: 1.36 kilograms or 3 lb

pic: 1.06 metres or 42 inches

qantar: varied from 44.93 kilograms to 50.82 kilograms, or 94 lb to a hundredweight

qasaba: 3 metres (measure of land)

Egypt under the mamluks

Much that was written about the history of Egypt in the nineteenth century arose from a premise that the reign of Muhammad Ali ushered in a new form of government and a new economic system, both of which turned Egypt into a modern nation state. Muhammad Ali was credited with being an innovator, 'The Founder of Modern Egypt' to paraphrase the title of a book, and was supposed to herald a total break with the mamluk past. While there is some truth in such a belief, it is nonetheless my contention that Muhammad Ali did not introduce a wholly new economic system into Egypt, but rather refined and expanded the existing system, and that his new form of government arose out of the exigencies of that economic system. While Muhammad Ali certainly helped to turn Egypt into a modern state, he did not start with a *tabula rasa*, but had precedents that showed him the path to take.

In one sense Egypt's strategic location and her membership within the family of the Ottoman empire determined her line of development regardless of who the rulers of the country were. Egypt's local production and her agricultural strength also were determinants that drew the general lines of the economic system along which the country was to develop. That development could be halted or accelerated by different circumstances but could never be altered radically. This is not to espouse a determinist view of history, but to spell out the fact that 'a society that could be completely moulded by its immediately preceding period would have to have a structure so malleable as to be virtually invertebrate.'¹ Egypt had a definite structure upon which Muhammad Ali drew variations.

During the eighteenth century Egypt was dominated by a mamluk-merchant (*tujjar*) alliance, whose main source of income, other than land, was derived from long-distance trade within the confines of Ottoman territories. Such trade can be described as forming part of an Ottoman world market, which responded to internal fluctuations and currents, and was only peripherally responsive to influences and trade outside the Ottoman empire. By the middle of the century Europe

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needed the raw materials that Egypt and the rest of the Middle East produced and, exerting a lively attraction to divert these commodities to western markets, offered greater financial incentives than did the Ottoman market. At the same time Europe needed markets for its finished goods, and these were most conveniently to be obtained in the Ottoman empire. On the other hand the mamluks, involved in struggles amongst each other for control of Egypt, bought arms from Europe and, in order to pay for them, diverted some of the trade towards Europe. The rise of a Syrian Christian mercantile elite in Egypt was a symptom of that gradual change of trading partners. Trade with Europe became deficitary, a trend that accelerated as the century progressed. For a while such deficit was compensated for by profits from trade with the Ottoman empire, but trade with Europe imperceptibly increased with the import of finished products and the export of raw materials until the Muhammad Ali period, when it rapidly increased at the expense of trade with other parts of the Ottoman empire. By the 1840s Egypt's major trading partner had become Europe and Egypt became part of the European world system, that is, it became subject to European trade pressures and economic directives rather than responding to local conditions. The reorientation of trade patterns from internal-imperial to external-European was a phenomenon not limited to Egypt alone but a consequence of a general reorientation of trade for the entire region.

Long-distance trade in Egypt followed a variety of routes, the most important of which was the route to the Ottoman empire and Syria, followed in importance by trade with the Red Sea areas, then, in descending order, trade with Europe, North Africa and the Sudan. Egyptian trade involved three categories of products: items of a transit nature, raw materials and finished products. A large portion of trade was of a transit nature and re-exported. Two-thirds of trade from the Red Sea route was re-exported to Turkey and to Europe.² One-fifth of the Syrian exports to Egypt were trans-shipped to Europe, North Africa and the Sudan, and one-sixth of all European imports were sent to the Red Sea and the Sudan.

Coffee was the main source of wealth for the long-distance merchants, the *tujjar*, and was the single item that had given them the fabulous prosperity that approximated the wealth of the *karimi*, the spice merchants of the middle ages. Every year 200 million paras worth of coffee was re-exported to the Ottoman empire and to Europe. The Egyptian merchants had a monopoly of the coffee trade in the Red Sea and made a 75 per cent profit on it. The hegemony of the coffee *tujjar* was challenged during the first quarter of the century when coffee from the Antilles began to displace coffee from the Yemen. A concession to

import coffee was granted in 1723 to the French Compagnie des Indes which was able to import coffee directly from the Yemen and bypass the Egyptian merchants. Antillean coffee, though not as good as the Yemeni variety, was much cheaper and was less subject to the caprice of the Egyptian rulers, who slapped high taxes on it or put it under embargo when ordered to do so by the Ottoman authorities, even though the same rulers were not averse to breaking that embargo clandestinely for a higher price from the exporters. As more than half the exports to France had been coffee, Antillean coffee caused a major financial loss to the *tujjar*, albeit not a catastrophic one, as French trade was only a small percentage of the whole, and the Ottomans continued to import large quantities of coffee. By the middle of the century the Ottomans began to import Antillean coffee, which further displaced Yemeni coffee, so that, though the trade continued to be profitable, it was in much smaller proportions than before. The decline in the coffee trade was a symptom of the general decline in export trade that was to follow, a decline that arose from both internal and external factors, and necessitated a change in items exported and imported.

Among the exported products from Egypt, cloth loomed large. Textiles such as dimity from Damietta, or the cloth woven in Mahalla, Rosetta, Asiut, Manfalut, Abu Tig, etc. had up to 1731 constituted 45.1 per cent of Egyptian exports. Textiles were exported to France and then re-exported to Holland and to Spain. In 1740 a 'baisse spectaculaire' occurred in the French import of Egyptian cloth. Raymond claims³ that this decrease was in part due to the diminishing quality of the cloth exported. Another reason was a restriction imposed by the Marseille chamber of commerce on the width of cloth imported. That restriction was the outcome of new French looms which turned out cloth of a broader cut than that produced by the narrow Egyptian looms, the strictures on importing narrow cloth being imposed to protect French textiles.

The decline in trade of coffee and cloth were two good external reasons for the decline in Egyptian trade. The more drastic reasons were those of an internal nature, and showed a shift in trade patterns that left Egypt deficitary by the end of the century. By 1783, with imports of 834,451,205 paras and exports of 774,809,459 paras, that deficiency is clear. Of that trade 45 per cent was with the Ottoman empire, involving some 737,066,994 paras of export and import products, 35 per cent was with the Red Sea and involved 573,750,000 paras, while trade with Europe comprised 14 per cent of the total trade and 235,598,053 paras.⁴ Where trade with the Ottoman empire and North Africa showed a margin of profit of 125,483,256 paras and 19,434,383 paras respectively,

all other trade showed a deficit. In brief, Egyptian trade was by then consistently indebted to the European and Red Sea merchants by 59,641,746 paras, more or less, depending on the year.

As a symptom of this trade deficit we notice that late in the century Egyptian imports from Europe consisted of medium-quality cloth, constituting some 50 per cent of all imports in general, but covering 60 per cent of France's exports to Egypt, the rest being dye, paper, metal (iron, tin, lead, pewter), glass, amber, coral, spices and, by the second half of the century, weapons. Primary articles consisted of 19.9 per cent and luxury items came to 10.2 per cent of the total. In return Egypt exported raw and semi-raw materials: rice, flax, wool, cotton thread, leather, senna, saffron, salammoniac – equalling 60.4 per cent of exports. Articles re-exported from the Red Sea and the Sudan trade comprised 26 per cent of the total, and a small quantity of locally manufactured products, like cloth, came to 10 per cent of the total after having constituted some 50 per cent of the whole.⁵ Wheat, rice and coffee were on the list of items that were often put under embargo by Istanbul, but they were continually exported in clandestine fashion. Trade with the Ottoman empire was mostly in coffee, which covered one-fifth of the total trade; in rice, which came a close second, since Egypt was a major supplier of rice for the empire and exported over 20,000 ardabs a year, that is, 13.8 per cent of exports; in cotton, raw or as thread, and in textiles and linen. Egyptian textiles sold in Aibania, Salonica, Smyrna, Chios, Syria, etc. In return Egypt imported wood, tobacco, soap from Palestine, cotton, silk and dried fruits from Syria. Syria supplied much of the raw material for the Egyptian textile weavers who worked in cotton, silk and *alaja*, a mixture of both.

From this picture we can see that Egyptian textiles had fallen in the European import market, while French textiles had risen in the Egyptian import market, a clear indication that French textiles were displacing local production. Such displacement may have been the result of French technological superiority, but that was only one variable, and the major technological gap does not happen until the nineteenth century. Other variables, such as the cost of labour and materials, changes in market and in marketing techniques should be taken into account. The price of raw cotton had increased 100 per cent over the century, while the price of finished cotton and yarn had remained relatively constant.⁶ The local spinners and weavers were thus caught up in declining profits and rising costs, which may well have accounted for the decline in production. The importation of French medium-priced cloth was a symptom of competition with local products and their displacement, rather than a symptom of an expanding market within

Egypt. There was therefore a decline in certain trades, like those connected with the production of cotton cloth, although other trades like silk were doing well. That change and decline in trade was tied to the changing political system of the day.

According to Raymond and others, the Egyptian political and economic system changed profoundly between 1760 and 1770. In the past the dominant system of economic exploitation in the urban milieu lay in a symbiotic relationship between the janissaries and the artisans, which reached its peak around 1670–1700. The janissaries ‘protected’ the artisans, and exploited them by becoming their ‘partners’, but at the same time they assured their security and tempered the exactions levied on them by the authorities. In time the janissaries were no longer imported from the empire but were recruited locally and became ‘Egyptianized’. The ascendancy of the *ojakat*, or regiments, ensured the well-being of the Egyptian artisans, and the ordered and reasonable exploitation of the urban tax farms, the *iqtaat*. Around 1750 the janissaries began to lose their influence to the mamluk beys and the picture changed. When the mamluk beys, whose main source of income had been the rural tax farms, the *iltizamat*, displaced the janissaries, they seized the urban *iqtaat* and thoroughly exploited them. Primarily they needed the extra money to finance the civil wars that pitted them against other mamluks and the *ojakat* for domination over the resources of the country. They obtained their funds by squeezing extraordinary taxes from the population – a move that was copied later by Muhammad Ali. The pressures on the population resulted in periodic uprisings which necessitated further coercive measures, a greater expansion of armed men and a need for further funds with which to pay them. That vicious circle was a good reason for increasing extortion in tax-raising on the part of the mamluks. Furthermore, the elite among the military oligarchy were involved in mercantile activities in cooperation with the *tujjar* and become interested in acquiring naval capacity to protect their shipping from attacks. Such expansion in the naval field was motivated both by a desire to protect and to expand control of trade. That trend was not unique to the Egyptian mamluks but was followed by Jazzar Ahmad in Acre, by the Ottomans themselves, who embarked on a naval programme, and even by Dhahir al-Umar in Galilee. At the same time as the mamluks were building up a mercenary army, the phenomenon was being duplicated in other parts of the empire, among the Azms of Damascus, Dhahir and Jazzar, for example, as well as among Balkan potentates. The reason for such an arms race still needs to be determined, but it is obvious that there was an expansion in the fighting power and capabilities of the rulers in the area.

Apart from their need to find funds to finance an expansion of military and naval capabilities, the mamluks did not have the same relationship with the artisans that the *ojakat* had developed. The tempered exploitation of the urban *iqtaat* by the *ojakat* was then replaced by severe financial exploitation by the mamluks.⁷ One direct consequence of that repression was a decline in the production and quality of export cloth. It may well be that the *tujjar* who stood to make more money from the importation of foreign cloth than from the exportation of local cloth had encouraged that trade, which, since it benefited their financial partners, the mamluks, was condoned by them. In 1790 the French government placed an embargo on cloth export, as a result of which the same merchants tried to encourage a textile revival in Egypt for export, by imposing lower excise taxes on cloth at Bulaq and Damietta.

The process of exploiting the *iqtaat* was also aimed at weakening the janissaries and the *ojakat* by divesting them of their main sources of income, including the 10 per cent fee on successions of defunct *tujjar* and artisans that had been a janissary prerogative and a main source of wealth. Similar conflicts took place in other parts of the Ottoman empire: in Damascus there were outbreaks of violence between the Yerliyya and the imperial janissaries and, in Aleppo, conflict between the janissaries and the Ashraf. It would seem that a new stratum of affluent men was being created at the time in each of these areas. That new stratum was composed of high ulama, of *tujjar*, and of landholders, who combined forces with the military elite. They had common interests: in the first place they wished to redirect trade from an internal to an export-oriented market from which they stood to benefit. Such redirection implied a greater degree of exploitation of the rural and urban workers in order to cream off commodities for export. Finally, the establishment of law and order became a necessary adjunct to allow for exploitation without fear of uprising or civil disturbance, and to permit commodities to reach their markets safely. It was necessary for the *tujjar* to become allies of the mamluks, who kept order, and of the ulama, who kept the population quiescent, to succeed in that enterprise.

The rise of these new elements may be related to the reorientation of trade patterns that was taking place. The *tujjar*, engaged in large-scale export of raw materials (e.g. cotton and rice) to offset the loss in coffee and textile exports, caused a subsequent decline in small traders, local artisans and producers by raising the price of raw materials through export, and by importing finished goods that competed with local production. The rank and file of the *ojakat*, whether in Egypt, Aleppo or Damascus, who had blended with the local population, had intermarried with it and identified itself with the artisanal classes, sought to resist the

political changes that militated against their common interests in favour of the other, rising stratum. On the other hand, the heads of the *ojakat*, who had allied themselves with the mamluks and were themselves recruiting mamluk households, identified and merged with the new stratum and helped establish its ascendancy.

The mamluk beys in the past had derived their main source of income from the rural *iltizamat*. These tax farms had acquired a quasi-hereditary status and could be bought and sold. Some of the land was rendered further immune from confiscation by becoming alienated in the form of mortmain (*wagf*).⁸ The tax farmer, or *multazim*, collected the taxes due to the government on the land, and remitted them to the treasury. As his fee for collecting the taxes he was granted a piece of land, *usya* land, on which he paid the land tax (*miri*) only, and which was cultivated by corvée labour.⁹ The *multazim* also imposed several illegal and extraordinary taxes on the fallahin, which in the course of time became inscribed in the registers as customary taxes, even though they were illegal. Some historians believed *usya* land to form 10 per cent of the acreage, or *zimam*, of a village, which may have been true at some time, but was not true by the eighteenth century. By then the proportion of *usya* land to land worked by the fallahin, *ard al-fallah*, differed in different villages.¹⁰ The *multazim* collected the taxes from the fallahin with an army of assistants, all of whom had to be paid fees by the peasantry and all of whom extorted from the fallah as much as they could. The advent of the tax collector and his procession struck terror into the heart of every village.

Land taxes fell into two categories. The first was a tax on land that was surveyed (*mamsuha*) and *athariyya*, which together comprised *ard al-fallah*, and which had definite boundaries; taxes there were on an individual basis assigned on the faddan of land. The same fallah tilled the same land and passed that right on to his heirs, so long as they continued to pay the taxes. Such land was found mostly in Lower Egypt. The second category of land tax fell on land that varied from year to year depending on the level of the flood waters. Such lands were redistributed among the fallahin every year by the village head, the shaikh or *umda*, and the tax was assigned (*kilala*) on a collective basis on the whole village.¹¹ Should one fallah default on his taxes the difference was made up by the collectivity under the supervision of the shaikh.

The fallahin had no property rights over the land, and neither had the tax farmers. Land was crown domain. The fallahin simply enjoyed usufructuary rights (*hiyaza*) or use (*tasarruf*) over the land. The fallah who worked a plot of *athariyya* land was tied to the soil, and, if he tried to escape paying his taxes by running away, the *multazim* could bring

him back by force.¹² He was abused and tyrannized by the *multazim* and, in the words of Jabarti, himself a *multazim*, he was 'more degraded than the slaves'.¹³ Yet the fallah was not entirely powerless even though he had little access to the formal structures of power. Fallahin do not live in isolation; they play a positive role in the transformation of society even when they are the most vulnerable members of that society. The fallah had means for resisting his exploitation when it reached a certain level. He and his entire village could escape into the hills in Middle and Upper Egypt and so avoid paying the taxes once in a while, though clearly they could not afford to do that constantly. Fallahin could and did rise in armed revolts, they could set fire to the crops, they could cheat on the size of their land and expand it at the expense of someone else, especially absentee landlords. With the connivance of the *shaikh al-balad* the fallah could defraud the *multazim*, grow crops on *waqf* land that was unsupervised, claim the land was unwatered and avoid paying its taxes, when in fact it was watered and thrived. Fallahin throughout the ages have invented thousands of tricks to mitigate the rigours of their exploitation. Sometimes the tricks met with success; at other times they failed. Though exploited unmercifully, the fallah was, in the final analysis, an important member of his society. Without his efforts, the elite could not survive. If the fallah were squeezed too rudely he could always run away from the land, when the *multazim* would be hard put to find someone else to till the soil in a country that was underpopulated and where more land than fallahin was the norm for most of the nineteenth century. Such methods of protest allowed the fallah to survive and were a gauge to measure how far exploitation could go before becoming counter-productive.

The fallah did have certain rights, minimal though they were. He could mortgage his land (*gharuqa*) and regain it once he had paid off the debt. He could alienate the land to someone else with the *multazim*'s approval.¹⁴ He decided what to grow and how to grow it, what to sell and to whom to market the produce. He made the decisions that affected his well-being: to produce more or less, to carry out cottage industries or not, to breed livestock or poultry.

Usya land which went to the *multazim* as payment for his tax-collecting services was frequently turned into *waqf*, when it became, to all intents and purposes, private property and was inheritable. *Waqf* lands, or *rizqa* lands, were lands endowed for charitable purposes. By the end of the eighteenth century some 600,000 faddans, or one-fifth of the total land area, was constituted as *waqf* by legal or illegal means. *Rizqa* lands paid less tax than others and the land was said to be generally superior.¹⁵ Such land was exempted from extra-legal taxation.

While some *rizqa* lands were in the possession of their legal owners, others were simply taken over by the shaikhs of the region, or by individuals who paid the legal owners a modest sum of money and kept the rest of the profits. Jabarti gives an example of a *waqf* covering over 1,000 faddans which paid the beneficiaries fifty purses, while making several times that amount in profit. He also claimed that most of the revenues of the village notables came from the illegal possession of *rizqa* lands.

A further category of land was exempted from taxation; that was land known as *masmuh al-mashayikh*, and *masmuh al-urban*.¹⁶ The former was land granted to the ulama and to some village shaikhs. The second category went to buy the goodwill of bedouin leaders. A further category, *masmuh al-masatib*, was granted to defray the expenses of hospitality to wayfarers and government officials.

We can clearly see that only a small proportion of the revenues from land reached the central treasury, and that the larger share went to the various intermediaries who inserted themselves between the fallah and the treasury as middlemen, whether legally as *multazimun*, or illegally.

Early in the eighteenth century the *iltizamat* ceased to be sufficient for the wants of the mamluks, who became involved with the *ojakat* in a series of bloody battles over mastery of the land and its resources. The beys were frequently in arrears of taxation and sought to alienate their land to those groups in society who were possessed of ready cash. Such groups were the *tujjar*, and the high ulama who derived much of their income from salaries and wages.¹⁷ By 1728 so many *iltizamat* had been alienated that a special register was set up, *sijill isqat al-qura*¹⁸ showing which *iltizam* had been alienated and to whom, a process which clearly demonstrated that land was becoming treated as a commodity. Such alienations of land could be either of a permanent or of a temporary nature, and revealed a need for cash among the elite. The trend towards the alienation of land was accelerated in periods of inflation such as in 1720-6 and 1770 onwards when Egypt entered a period of currency debasement when the para lost 50 per cent of its value.¹⁹

In the past when the rulers of Egypt had needed money they had found it through extortion, the imposition of forced loans or in commercial ventures. From the seventeenth century the rulers had invested in the coffee trade along with the *tujjar*, and close links grew between both groups. The elite also invested in export crops like rice and sugar-cane. Abdal Rahman Katkhoda al-Qazdughli, for example, had three rice-growing villages in the region of Damietta.²⁰ Throughout the inflationary periods, those with ready cash were the *tujjar* and the ulama. The ulama possessed lands free of taxation, frequently covering

whole villages.²¹ The merchants, or the richest among them, were enormously wealthy. When Qasim al-Sharaibi died in 1735, he left a sum of 12,642,372 paras and a fleet of ships, not to speak of buildings – houses, shops, tenements, etc. Half a century later Mahmud Muharram could leave 15,742,498 paras valued at 5,667,299 constant paras because of 177 per cent inflation, compared to Sharaibi's 8,849,600 constant paras.²² These figures show that the wealthy *tujjar* who traded in coffee and spices, as did these two, continued to be affluent in times of crisis, such as that at the end of the century. *Tujjar* and ulama became *multazimun* along with mamluk beys. One merchant in 1673 had an *iltizam* of three entire villages.²³ Muhammad Dada al-Sharaibi left *iltizamat* yielding a *faiz*, or profit, of one million paras, out of a succession that was valued at 37 million paras.²⁴

The entrance of new groups into the rural milieu as *multazimun* – and by and large as absentee *multazimun*, unlike the old mamluk beys many of whom had resided on the land – further enabled new groups to share in the landed wealth. The *shaikh al-balad* as the representative of the *multazim* was authority *in situ*. He probably planted the *usya* of the *multazim* in cash crops, and no doubt cheated the absent *multazim* out of much of his profit. When shaikhs cultivated any *athariyya* land in Upper Egypt it was treated like *usya* land in terms of taxation, though in Lower Egypt only a portion of the land was so exempted,²⁵ but, whichever way it was, they profited from their position in the village. The shaikhs also extorted surplus from the fallah at the local level.²⁶ Funds which should have gone to the *multazim* or to the treasury were diverted into the shaikh's pocket. He could advance cash for cash crops and share in their profits; he could lend the fallahin money when they needed to borrow to pay their taxes; he could become a petty capitalist in the village. Shaikhs or *umad* were no doubt the ones who planted the cash crops such as rice and sugar-cane in the Delta and the Said, along with rich mamluks who had entire villages growing these crops.

The fact that the beys had to share their rural wealth with other elements of society at a time of inflation and declining trade was one variable among the others we have mentioned that caused a radical change in the economic circumstances of the country and brought beys and *ojakat* to fighting a series of bloody battles.

A modified political system came into being, one dominated by the mamluk beys who ousted the *ojakat* from their former positions of authority. That system aimed at establishing a centralized form of government in place of the collegial system that had operated previously. Ali Bey al-Kabir, the chief exponent of the new system, in 1768 changed the structure of the army, set aside the Ottoman regiments as

his main fighting arm and in their place hired an army of mercenaries. Jabarti recounted that he recruited men 'from all nations, Dalat, Druze, Matawila, Syrians'.²⁷ At the same time Ali Bey massacred his opponents and 'exiled his notables, dispersed them in the villages and had them followed, strangled and killed; he exterminated them root and branch and exiled the rest ... he exterminated the leaders among his early household companions (*khushdashinahu*) and his tribe, and ... destroyed the old houses, he destroyed the weighty laws and the established customs.'²⁸

The new army was armed with firearms and cannon, which necessitated an almost inexhaustible fund of money to pay the soldiers' salaries and buy the imported weaponry. Cash could be procured either by extorting more from the population, or by displacing those who controlled funds. In the process Ali Bey also established law and order, which helped trade. Jabarti recounted that under his rule the roads had become safe for travellers even when they were carrying sums of money. To control the resources of Egypt, Ali Bey had to rule absolutely. Adversaries, actual or potential, were eliminated. Shaikh Hummam, head of the Hawwara tribe who controlled most of Upper Egypt, from Girga to Farshut, was an example. Hummam controlled the grain trade of the Said. Jabarti said that his grain storage areas were so vast that people thought they were gazing at fields of grain.²⁹ He had 12,000 bullocks working on his sugar-cane fields, another export item. He even controlled the port of Qusayr.³⁰ Such riches could not escape Ali Bey and he soon made an end of Hummam and his tribe. Their grain was exported to pay for the new artillery.

The next step was to extort more in terms of taxes. This he did by dismissing the Jewish customs officials and replacing them by Syrian Christians who showed him new ways of extorting money, and by shifting trade from finished products to exports of foodstuffs and raw materials in response to the market. Lastly, he set his sights on the Red Sea trade and sought to control it by conquering the Hijaz. When he went into Syria with the same intentions he got his deserts for the Ottomans bribed his supporters, who rose against him.

Ali Bey set an example which was emulated decades later, but with a greater degree of success: an example of controlling the resources of the country, instituting a centralized government which established law and order to encourage trade and commerce, expanding frontiers beyond the borders of Egypt in order to control the trade routes and their resources.

Ali Bey and the mamluks not only displaced the janissaries, with consequent troubles to the urban *iqtaat* which they ruthlessly exploited and impoverished, they also displaced the Muslim *tujjar* by encouraging the Syrian Christian merchants at the expense of the Muslim merchants.

During the first quarter of the century, c. 1730, there was an influx of Syrians of the Melkite rite into Egypt. Some historians believed that the Syrians came to Egypt fleeing the persecution of their sect in Syria by the Greek Orthodox Church. Whether they came to Egypt as the outcome of such persecution or whether they came because they had established trading links in Egypt is uncertain. Most of these immigrants were merchants and had been involved in the Syrian trade with Egypt. Consequently they landed in the ports of the eastern trade, Damietta and Rosetta, where they settled. The ascendancy of the Syrian merchants was quite spectacular in speed, for they came to rival and displace the Muslim merchants. The Muslims formed the majority of merchants in the country, even when they were not Egyptians but were Maghribi, Syrian or Turkish established in Egypt. At first the Syrian Christians stepped into the shoes of the European merchants and, becoming involved in the export market, they took over the sale of French cloth in Egypt, much to the disgust of the French, who wrote, 'Ever since the advent of these Christians, full of ruse and ill faith, into the country, commerce in general has been led towards its ruin.'³¹

How immigrants who had been in the country for such a short period were able to control the commerce of the land and wrest it from the hands of the indigenous merchants is a question that quickly comes to mind. Raymond shows that by the end of the century more than half the successions of rich merchants belonged to the Syrian Christians.³² One answer lies in the fact that the Syrians were able to show the beys new ways of extorting money from the population. Ali Bey appointed Syrians to the customs to levy new taxes, perhaps because he distrusted the Jewish customs officials' close links with the janissaries. An alliance between Ali Bey and the Syrians was forged, aimed at dispossessing Muslim *tujjar*. The bey believed that the Christians, being minorities, were more easily dominated and used by him to permit him a greater degree of commercial and financial control of the country's resources.

Once in control over the customs, the Syrians were able to gain control of the trade. The head of the customs could fine *tujjar*, he could turn a blind eye to favour others, he could divert and control trade and thus make or break a merchant. The Syrians, with their knowledge of the Syrian trade, their control of the customs of Damietta, followed by the rest of the customs tax farms, were able to boost their co-religionaries and grab the lion's share of trade for themselves. In due course they controlled the Red Sea trade, the last enclave of the indigenous merchants. They were able to do so only with the connivance of the beys, who placed them in such advantageous positions in return for their assistance in milking the country

further, and for allowing themselves to be milked by the beys when the need arose.

The Syrians in Damietta were also to take over the rice trade in the region. Rice was a cash crop, a prime export commodity. The fallahin of the region grew the rice themselves as a protocapitalist enterprise. They could borrow money from the money lenders at 10 per cent interest to grow the rice, which was then sold to the merchants for export to the Ottoman empire. Money lending had introduced itself into the Delta in the eighteenth century as one aspect of a change to a cash-crop economy. It was also a consequence of the fact that the fallahin were expected to pay their taxes in cash in Lower Egypt, and in cash or in kind in Upper Egypt.³³ On the other hand, rice was not a subsistence crop; it was a luxury item grown purely for export, and made up 13.8 per cent of the total exports. The merchants quite probably were also *multazimun* of the region. A power struggle between the indigenous merchants and the Syrian Christians soon developed over the control of the rice trade.

We get hints of that power struggle in an account given by Jabarti. In that account he described the case in 1768 of a merchant from Damietta, Haj Umar al-Tarabulsi, who was a Syrian Muslim long settled in the area. It seemed that Haj Umar had allegedly been insulted by a Syrian Christian merchant in Damietta, and had reported the incident to the rector of al-Azhar University, the most prestigious centre of learning in Egypt, Shaikh Hifni, a friend of his, and to Shaikh Hasan al-Jabarti, the author's father. The latter issued a *fatwa*, which quoted an older *fatwa* that decreed that in the case of damnation (*lan*), the Christian was to be burned to death. The Christian, fearing for his life, went to Cairo, 'for in those days the authority of the Muslims was great', ('*wa kana idh dhaka shawkat al-Islam qawiyya*'), wrote Jabarti, and sought the aid of his co-religionaries. With their assistance, and generous bribes, an entirely different interpretation of the case was given. Jabarti hinted that they bribed the rector of al-Azhar. A few days later Ali Bey had come to power, and 'in his time the position of Christians became great through Muallim Rizq and Muallim Ibrahim al-Gawhari, his two secretaries', and they conspired to send Haj Umar into exile in chains, and pillaged his shops and stores in Damietta. When Ali Bey died, Haj Umar sought to return to Egypt, but his return was blocked by Muhammad Abu-l Dhahab's Christian secretaries, Muallim Ibrahim al-Jammal and Muallim Yusif al-Bitar.³⁴

That conflict between a Muslim merchant and a Syrian Christian merchant was more than a mere quarrel between religious groups; it may have centred on the control of the rice trade in Damietta. It hinted at a dispute that pitted rice *multazimun*, of whom Muhammad Bey

Abu-l Dhahab was one, against the rich fallahin who borrowed money to grow the rice crop, and the *tujjar* who exported the rice to the Ottoman empire. The French at the time were trying to divert the rice crop to France with little success, for the Egyptians rioted when they heard that the rice was being shipped there. The Syrians, who in all likelihood had become the money-lenders of the region, tried to divert the rice trade into their hands to be able to sell it to the French at a higher price than the indigenous merchants were selling it to the Ottomans.

The apparently religious conflict in the area, which was in fact conflict over a means of livelihood, continued over the rest of the century, but the Syrian foothold grew stronger when Abu-l Dhahab took their side and sold his rice to them. The Syrians shipped their rice to France, although the Egyptians rioted, and continued to riot periodically, showing that the battle over the rice trade was to continue for a long time.

By 1780 some of the Syrian Christians were becoming *beratli*.³⁵ Some had links with Italy, others with France, while many intermarried with Europeans. Their links with Europe strengthened as their trade with France increased and, soon, 'The Europeans, and the minorities who share a common interest with them, consolidate their monopoly of Mediterranean commerce, and divert to themselves a considerable part of the profits from Egypt's oriental commerce.'³⁶

One by-product of the entry of the Syrian merchants into the Egyptian scene was the impoverishment of the Muslim *tujjar*, by their displacement and the beginning of the transfer of their control over the Egyptian trade to a Christian minority. This is not to imply that there were no indigenous merchants with enormous fortunes left, but it certainly indicates that the bulk of trade in Egypt was no longer in indigenous hands but in alien and *beratli* hands, that is, Egypt was becoming integrated into the European market.

The French merchants, who initially complained bitterly about the Syrian Christians who had ousted them from the cloth trade, soon joined hands with them. Their ventures became so profitable that Abu-l Dhahab Bey could demand, and get, from the French merchants a gold carriage worth 72,000 livres before shipping.³⁷

Once the strong hand of Ali Bey had been replaced by that of his weak successors, the period of centralization came to an end as each bey scrambled for his share of the booty. The strong hand of an Ali Bey or of a Shaikh Hummam, which had given some measure of internal security and stability to the country, was once again replaced by the loose authority of the mamluk beys, who set at each other's throats in an attempt to wrest more money from the country. The result was the 'anarchy' that writers of the Description de l'Egypte and their contem-

poraries talk about. That anarchy, expressed in uprisings and revolts, was an expression of indigenous resistance to extortion, and meant not 'chaos' but a loss of central control over the countryside. In Cairo similar uprisings on the part of the artisans were equally a means of resistance to an unbearable situation. People even looked back to the days of Ali Bey with nostalgia in comparison with their present condition. Examples of mamluk extortion were manifold. Abu-l Dhabab extorted money from the Turkish merchants of the Red Sea trade. When he died, the Ottoman government demanded some six million paras as duty on his succession. His successors refused to pay the money out of their share and parcelled it out among the city of Cairo and the neighbouring villages. Murad Bey extorted 9 million paras from the Syrian Christian merchants of Cairo.³⁸ During the duumvirate of Murad and Ibrahim a general uprising broke out against them and they were driven out of Cairo, but unfortunately not for long.

Jabarti's chronicles after the death of Ali Bey are a litany of the loans and avania imposed on the population, interspersed with accounts of sporadic uprisings in protest.³⁹ The situation became so bad that Jabarti does not bother to list events during the last few years of their reign, but contents himself with a general statement regarding the extortions and tyranny of the mamluks. A state of quasi-permanent civil war characterized the country, leading to a severe financial crisis from 1780. The para declined to 54 per cent of its value in 1782. The price of wheat rose from 92 constant paras in 1741-50 to 715 constant paras in 1784 and to 745 constant paras in 1792, which meant that the ardab had attained 1,300 paras of the day in 1784, and an unprecedented high of 1,620 paras in 1792.⁴⁰ These last economic crises were also due to a series of epidemics and famines that plagued the land. During the famine of 1784, Jabarti says, the fallahin left their villages because they could not pay their taxes, nor pay the exactions imposed by the beys. They came to the towns crying famine; they ate everything that was thrown into the streets, and their hunger was so terrible that they ate the raw corpses of horses, donkeys and camels.⁴¹ That year of famine was succeeded by an outbreak of plague in 1785 when approximately one-sixth of the population was killed. Plague returned in 1791, followed by a worse famine in 1792 when people allegedly resorted to anthropophagy.⁴² The population was decimated and impoverished, and a sizeable proportion of lands remained uncultivated through lack of fallahin to till the soil. The French consul estimated these fallow lands to comprise three-quarters of the total acreage,⁴³ which seems a gross exaggeration.

The outcome of these political changes and natural catastrophes was the imposition of a greater burden than before on the urban guilds. In

1790 the French government placed an embargo on the export of French goods and the transmission of French currency abroad. French merchants in Egypt thus could not pay for the goods they bought, either in cash or in kind. Yet France had a growing urban population and was in constant need of importing grain. The need was so acute over the years that an ancient statute in the city of Marseille allowed for the seizure of grain ships lying in the harbour, if the need arose. The need did arise, and in 1723 when Marseille was allowed to import grain she became the granary of all the southern provinces.⁴⁴ Before the embargo, Marseille had imported yearly some 800,000 ardabs of grain from Egypt via the Greek archipelago.⁴⁵ In 1792 the embargo was temporarily broken and the city of Paris saved from famine by importing grain from Egypt. The mamluks, beginning with Ali Bey, controlled the wheat trade and often cornered the market in Egypt in order to drive up the price. The French embargo meant a substantial loss of money to the beys; it also accounted for the extortion of money from the French merchants by the beys, probably because the merchants could not pay their bills, and they left Egypt, where they could no longer buy or sell.

During the last half of the eighteenth century Europe had been undergoing a technological revolution that was to culminate in the industrial revolution. Techniques of production were improving, especially in the field of textile production. The French, for example, were importing vast amounts of cotton from Egypt; later on they turned to silk production, importing the raw material from Palestine, Syria and Lebanon. Their mills rivalled, and surpassed, anything produced in the Middle East, not only for luxury items but also for medium-priced cloth, so that an increase in the importation of French cloth was noticeable in that period. The French consul attributed that increase to the affluence of the middle classes, which was sorely belied by the economic situation of the country. We can only conclude that the medium-priced French cloth was cheaper than the equivalent Egyptian product, so that French production was not only destroying the Egyptian textile export market but was also undermining the local internal trade in textiles.

At a time when trade was in decline, and Egyptian artisan production was equally in decline, the ruling group needed more funds, and to offset their losses they turned to the urban tax farms and drained them dry. Raymond has shown that the urban centres were then made to produce more funds than the rural *iltizam*, which had always been the main source of income in the country. He shows that charges on the population of Cairo by the end of the century came to 4 or 5 hundred million paras, or 10 to 12 million pts., a sum which approximated the taxes derived from the entire rural *iltizam* of the land.⁴⁶

One can conclude either that the beys had a precarious hold on the rural *iltizam*, and were not able to extort more from them because they had to contend with other elements sharing with them in the rural wealth: *tujjar*, ulama, women and *umad* or shaikhs; or, because they were absentee owners, they could be bilked of their funds; or that the decimated population had led to a general decline in agriculture. On the other hand, the city of Cairo was the mamluk stronghold; there they could extort funds with impunity even though the population periodically rose against them. Measures taken in Cairo were more drastic than in the countryside, where the entire population of a village could temporarily escape the tax collector by hiding in caves or in the hills. In Cairo, the beys could break and enter any home with absolute cynicism. When one bey was scolded by his colleagues Murad and Ibrahim for doing just that he simply retorted, 'We all plunder, you plunder and I plunder.'⁴⁷

The decline in trade resulted in a drying up of capital invested in artisan production, and the extortions did the rest. Productivity fell to an all-time low, for any activity on the part of the artisan was countered by an increased tax.

Such changes as operated arose from upheavals of a profound internal nature as well. Egyptian trade and commerce was coming into conflict with European technology and was lagging behind, but artisan production was also falling off for purely indigenous reasons as well. The loss of janissary protection, the increased extortions resulting from the rise of the mamluks and their need for new weaponry and mercenaries, the decline in agricultural production through plagues and famines, all produced a situation in which there were no funds for improvement or for capital expansion, and accounted for the sorry state of affairs upon which the French savants in 1798 had commented. The decline of artisan production developed the growth of wage-labour, when some 15,000 men, or roughly 10–15 per cent of the male population of Cairo, became day labourers, showing the beginnings of a slow but inevitable proletarianization of the artisans. Raymond explains that in spite of its modernism the term 'proletariat' aptly described a population divested of economic tools and supporting themselves rather miserably, from vague activities.⁴⁸

He credits that decline in trade and in artisan production to 'the first effects of its progressive integration into the world market, which was in the making'.⁴⁹ Elsewhere he elaborates, 'The very structure of that commerce took on a quasi-colonial character.'⁵⁰

Concurrent with these negative changes for the poorer classes of the population, we note a change in the condition of the richer echelons of

the native elite, notably the increasing presence of the *tujjar* and the ulama in the ranks of the landed; that step hinted at a change in the existing system of landownership when land was becoming a commodity to be bought and sold. The next step was a development in the direction of private ownership of land, in a *de facto* fashion, although it was to become *de jure* only under Muhammad Ali. Simultaneously, or perhaps consequently, we see the development of what resembles an agro-capitalist production of export crops like sugar and rice, both of which demanded an initial outlay of capital, and which were cash crops grown by the affluent fallahin or *multazimun*. Cash transactions were becoming more commonplace and the mamluks were demanding their taxes in cash in some areas and in kind in others. The need for cash brought in a need for money-lenders, some of whom were alien, but many of whom were also the local shaikhs. The new group of landowners, or of people who regarded land as a commodity and who were diverting some of the surplus into their own pockets, would come into their own at the time of Muhammad Ali, and indeed were his early supporters.

The lost relationship between artisans and janissaries and the increased exploitation from the beys gave the revolts that broke out and wracked the country a protonationalist flavour, of indigenous inhabitants against an alien ruling class. But a total break between rulers and ruled was not yet to come. It needed a French occupation and the apparent failure of the beys to do their duty and protect the country from invasion, their sole *raison d'être* after all, to set the last nail in their coffin. It is this one single event that explains why the population and their native leaders turned to an unknown factor, like Muhammad Ali, rather than accept the rule of the beys once again. Change in the relationship between rulers and ruled was imminent by the end of the century as those with vested interests realized how deeply their interests were threatened by the anarchic rule of the beys. The French occupation of 1798 put a temporary stop to further internal disturbances against the beys, for the disturbances were now united and aimed against the French invaders. It suspended the day of reckoning with the beys for a period of three years, followed by four years of struggle for survival, and for hegemony over Egypt among a variety of contenders, which finally ended in the victory of one contender, Muhammad Ali.

Some historians would have us believe that the French occupation of Egypt was motivated by purely political reasons, by Franco-British rivalry, even by Napoleon's desire to reach India and wrest it from England. Julliany, a canny merchant, put his finger on the crux of the matter when he wrote, 'The object of Buonaparte's expedition to Egypt

was commercial as much as political. He devoted all his attention to the means for developing the commerce and agriculture of that rich country.⁵¹ Buonaparte was well aware of the potential riches of Egypt in terms of grain to feed southern France and in terms of raw materials. France had been the most powerful naval power in the Mediterranean, her ships having made long-distance trade a quasi-monopoly for French merchantmen, which were guarded from corsairs by the French navy. Once the French set out to conquer Egypt, the British stepped into the picture with an offer to assist the Ottomans in ousting the French from the occupation of a vital area of the Ottoman heartland. This British offer was a means of checking further French advance into the region which might jeopardize the safety of the overland routes to India, for there was a belief that the French were planning to follow in the footsteps of Alexander and march to India by land. There was the added reason that England did not relish French domination over such a strategic area as the Mediterranean, a domination that would threaten future British interests in the Ottoman empire. The British fleet under Lord Nelson managed to sink the French fleet in the Bay of Abuqir and to leave the French army stranded in Egypt.

When he first occupied Egypt, Napoleon planned to reform the land taxes and overhaul the entire tax structure. The Egyptians and Jabarti interpreted these tax changes as a means of confiscating the wealth of the country, *akhdh al-amwal*.⁵² The small diwan set up by the French drew up a series of rules which stipulated that property holders should provide the deeds of ownership, which deeds would be authenticated in the dossiers (*sijillat*) for a fee, after which the property would be evaluated and a tax of 2 per cent paid on it. If the property were not inscribed in the register it would be confiscated. Registering the property by showing deeds of ownership was an impossibility, added Jabarti ('*wa hadha shay muta adhir*'), because some of the deeds were too ancient, others had never been registered or had been inherited and the deed was made out in the name of an ancient ancestor. Jabarti added that the French also established duties on successions and on deaths. Successions were to be established within twenty-four hours of the death, or the property would accrue to the state. In brief, all property was to be registered and taxed. The entire procedure in fact came to nought because in October of that year, 1798, the Cairo insurrection broke out and shelved all plans for the time being. Further changes were in the offing. Shaw stated that in 1799 all tax farms were abolished,⁵³ which achieved little since the French controlled the Delta only, and the rest of the country remained under mamluk domination. The grain resources of Egypt were firmly held by the beys, and Kléber, who

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succeeded Napoleon as commander-in-chief in Egypt, had to negotiate with Murad Bey for grain to feed the French army in Cairo.

After Kléber's assassination in 1800, Abdallah Menou, a French convert to Islam, became governor. Menou was the laughing-stock of his colleagues because he could not sit a horse properly, had converted to Islam, and married the daughter of a bath-house keeper in Rosetta in the mistaken notion that he was marrying Egyptian aristocracy because her father was a member of the *ashraf*. He was also a source of amusement to the Egyptians because he treated his wife like a French lady, and picked up her handkerchief when it fell to the floor. Menou, however, was an able administrator, who had plans for turning Egypt into a French colony or *département*.

Menou's programme was to abolish all the existing taxes on land and to replace them by a single tax. Land was divided into three categories, depending on its strength, and taxed on a descending scale. Fallahin were expected to pay their taxes on an individual basis. The taxes were not to change but in bad flood years they could be decreased in the traditional manner. The land tax was divided into 24 parts; half of the tax was to go to the treasury, $\frac{3}{24}$ was to go to the village shaikhs, who were to supervise tax collection that was carried out by the Copts, with an extra share to indemnify them for the cost of clearing the canals and for the upkeep of the roads. Canals were no longer to be cleared by corvée labour, and the fallahin were to be paid out of $\frac{1}{24}$ of the taxes set aside for that purpose. The *multazimun* could accept full rights to their *usya* land and pay a tax accordingly, or they could be indemnified with $\frac{7}{24}$ of the tax in lieu of their *faiz*. The land of the fallah was to become his property.

To put this land reform into action a cadastral survey was first to be carried out. However, none of these plans were implemented, save that the French had stopped collecting taxes a year in advance, as was the mamluk custom, and would not be able to collect taxes for 1800 because in 1801 the Anglo-Ottoman invasion was to drive them from Egypt.

The French occupation was of too short a duration to leave any permanent traces in Egypt. It certainly did not transform Egypt economically, politically or intellectually, although claims that it did so have frequently been made. It was an interlude in Egyptian history that was important for other reasons. It broke the last links between mamluk beys and the indigenous population when the former showed that they were incapable of saving Egypt from invasion. It also brought French technocrats to the country, many of whom were St Simonians, and inspired them to offer their services to Muhammad Ali after 1815. The fact that by then the French army had been disbanded and most of its

men were out of jobs was an added incentive. The ancient monuments that they had seen in Egypt inspired them to return to that land and try to put their theories of technology into practice. Lastly, it brought the British into the Mediterranean, and with the destruction of the French its fleet was to be the most powerful in the sea. This last factor was to have more enduring effects on Egypt than anything else.

From this brief survey we can conclude that many of the 'innovations' later attributed to Muhammad Ali were in fact carried over from previous regimes.

The concept of a centralized government and the establishment of law and order, with consequent public security and internal stability, had been attempted by Ali Bey al-Kabir. He had derived that concept from reading about the golden age of the mamluks in Egypt prior to the Ottoman conquest, and sought to emulate Baibars and Qalawun, as Jabarti recounts. The outward expansion into Syria and the Hijaz had also been copied from the earlier mamluks by Ali Bey, although not with their success. The creation of a mercenary army primed with firearms and artillery can equally be attributed to Ali Bey, although Muhammad Ali, who copied these steps, did so with greater success. Credit might go to the French for initiating reforms in the field of land tenure and of taxation, although these reforms were nothing more than blueprints, for the French had a tenuous hold on the land at best. Perhaps, as Rivlin suggested, Muhammad Ali had seen a blueprint of Menou's reforms or, perhaps equally plausibly, these reforms were obvious and therefore inevitable.⁵⁴

The genius of Muhammad Ali lay in that he learned from the mistakes of his predecessors, and packaged their ideas into what developed into a coherent programme that continued the transformation of the socio-economic basis of local society, a transformation that had begun long before his arrival. In this he was an innovator as well as a follower, the perfect link with the mamluk past, for the first decade of his rule bore all the imprints of a mamluk system, as we shall see, and one could easily have called him 'the Last of the Mamluks'. At the same time he showed the way to the future by destroying the mamluk system, by his plans for industrialization, increased irrigation, the continued and extensive production of export crops, and lastly by Egyptianizing the bureaucracy. In brief, he drew the outline of a nation-state.

The French occupation and the disruption it wrought in Egyptian society made the penetration of that country by European trade a much easier task. We have seen that under the mamluks trade moved out of indigenous hands and into the hands of *beratli* minorities, who collaborated with the European merchants in diverting some of the oriental

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trade of the Red Sea to the west. Trade with Europe then formed only a small part of Egypt's total trade, so that one could talk of Egypt forming part of a world market centred on the Ottoman empire, with Europe being a peripheral element of the whole. The trend of increased trade with the west continued under Muhammad Ali and turned Egypt into a peripheral element of the European world market, weaning it from trade with the Ottoman empire. Simultaneously, the Ottoman empire itself was opened up to the European world market and entirely dominated by it.

The indigenous artisans had also become impoverished through the decline in trade, lack of capital investment, the rapacity of the rulers, their loss of protectors and the competition of western technology. Many of them had been reduced to the status of day labourers. That process was accelerated under the French occupation when trade was at a standstill because of the British blockade, and raw materials could no longer be imported, thus limiting production to local raw materials. Artisans turned to becoming donkey boys, itinerant sellers of foodstuffs or day labourers. These last were very likely the labour force that Muhammad Ali was to use in his factories when he industrialized the country. By then local artisan production had been left far behind in the race for markets and with the advent of the new western technology, especially in the field of textiles.

The exploitation of the land by both mamluk beys and French occupiers and the devastation that followed the Ottoman occupation, added to years of civil war, epidemics and famines, depopulated the countryside and caused much of the land to lie idle for lack of working hands. It also created a class of affluent fallahin, the village shaikhs and *umad*, who had acted as intermediaries between the fallahin and the *multazimun*. It revealed a process of private landownership with *waqf* lands being created out of *usya*, and with the *iltizamat* becoming inherited. Beginning with Muhammad Ali, that process was in time to alienate the fallah from his rights to the land, limited enough though these were, and to turn him for the larger part into a wage labourer by the end of the century.

To extract a greater degree of surplus, the *umad* and the *multazimun* turned the land to producing export crops for cash, and away from the usual subsistence crops which provided little surplus and which the fallah tended to grow when left on his own. Such a change took place in the coastal areas and in Middle Egypt with the growth of rice and sugar cane. The rapacity of the rulers and the demands of the west for raw materials were to accelerate that process, which could be carried out only at the expense of the fallah who was dragged from subsistence labour and made to work for cash profit in return for wages.

Egypt under the mamluks

The trends drawing Egypt more and more firmly within the meshes of the European market and away from her traditional channels became acute under the rule of Muhammad Ali, who had hopes of turning Egypt into an industrialized country. How an Albanian officer who landed in Egypt with the Anglo-Ottoman expeditionary forces in 1801 was to become ruler of that country, extraordinary though that may be, is not the most important aspect of his rise to power. The really extraordinary part lies in the vision which he had for the country, the means he used to accomplish it and the consequences to Egypt of these events for future generations.

Muhammad Ali the man

The tiny walled port of Kavala in Macedonia was no different from numberless other equally undistinguished ports of the Ottoman empire. The streets were narrow and winding, the roads and houses white-washed, shimmering in the heat of noon, hurting the eyes with their glare. Each house was surrounded by a patch of green and a vine or a fig tree to shelter it from the sun. Black-clad women scurried about their business; their men, who were fishermen or sailors, had left the port long before dawn and returned by mid-morning with the day's catch. Here and there a spot of colour revealed a Turkish soldier in uniform, for Kavala, a dot in the middle of a vast Ottoman empire, was administered by an Ottoman governor. The port was a busy one; much of its trade revolved round tobacco which was grown in the hinterland and was of fine quality.

In one of these small white houses a male child, Muhammad Ali, was born. The exact year of the child's birth is uncertain and could have been any time between 1182 A.H. or 1184 A.H., that is, between May 1768 and April 1771. In later years when he had become famous, Muhammad Ali chose 1769 as the year of his birth. The year in which Napoleon, Wellington and Ney were born seemed an auspicious year for brilliant generals. That date, falling between 20 Shaban 1182 and the 2nd of Ramadan 1183 A.H., was not the real year of his birth.

In 1263/1847 a gold medallion struck to commemorate the erection of the barrages across the Nile north of Cairo stated that Muhammad Ali was born in 1184 A.H. ('bin yüz seksen dört'), which year began on 27 April 1770 and ended on 15 April 1771. To add to the confusion his tombstone gives a different birth date. It states that he died on 13 Ramadan, 1265 (August 1849) at the age of 82, so that his birth date would have been 1183 (1769-70). When we put these two items of information together we conclude that he must have been born early in 1770. In the Egyptian archives a voluminous correspondence between the palace and the archivists revealed an attempt to establish the correct date of birth at the time when King Faruq was planning to commemo-

rate the centennial of his ancestor. It seemed that even the royal family was not quite sure about the birth date since there were discrepancies between all the given dates. Finally the archivists agreed that the correct date was that of 1770 or 1184 A.H.

Muhammad Ali came from lowly stock. He was the son of Ibrahim Agha, the son of Uthman Agha, the son of Ibrahim Agha, showing a military background for three generations. Beyond that, little is known about the family, or their origins. While historians have described them as being of Albanian origin, a family tradition believes that they might have been of Kurdish stock, and come from a village, Ilıc, in eastern Anatolia where they were horse traders.¹ At one time the family had moved from some unknown original village to Umar Bekir and from there Uthman Agha and his father Ibrahim had moved, first to Konia and then to Kavala.² The last move was a consequence of their involvement in a blood feud. We know little about the incident; the archives simply refer to a blood incident (*hadith dam*), when the family had to leave in a hurry for fear of reprisals.

In Kavala Ibrahim Agha married into the family of the governor (Chorbashi) of Kavaia; his bride was named Khadra. He was eventually appointed commander of a body of irregulars (*yol aghasi*). Muhammad Ali grew up in his father's house, although he always claimed in later years to have been orphaned early and raised by his father's brother, Tussun. That was pure myth. Ibrahim Agha died when his son was twenty years old, a full-grown and married man. The date on Ibrahim Agha's tombstone reads 1205/1790-1. Why Muhammad Ali invented such a story can be explained in a number of ways. He may have been on bad terms with his father and have chosen to live with his uncle Tussun. That was a common occurrence among extended families, especially if the uncle had no sons of his own. However, if Muhammad Ali had been on bad terms with his father he would not have named his first-born Ibrahim and his second-born Tussun, but reversed the names to honour his uncle first. Alternatively, and the most likely explanation, he invented his orphaned status to enhance himself as a self-made man who rose to fame against insuperable odds, including that disadvantage early in life. Behind such a fabrication there may have been an unconscious desire to cut all links with his past, to deny his past in a sense, and to invent a new one more befitting his new life and social position. The same factors had caused him to fabricate his birthday, to share a date with men he admired; as far as he was concerned, one birthday was as good as another. It may have derived from hidden animosity towards his father and a desire to identify with his uncle. Lastly, it may have been invented for the sake of his children, to contrast their circumstances as

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children of a famous and glorious father, to his, an orphan with no one to give him any help in life, yet who rose to fame and glory through his own efforts. His children, having the advantage of a famous father, could rise higher in life, were they to put their minds to it. Muhammad Ali may have felt that his younger children, who had been bred to ease and fortune, would not develop the backbone his eldest son had, and would not be fighters, so he constantly contrasted the giddy heights to which he had risen with the lowly depths of his modest family background and early separation from his father as encouragement to them to learn their lessons and become great men too.

Ibrahim Agha traded in tobacco as a side-line, and also chartered ships. By the age of ten, Muhammad Ali had been initiated into the tobacco business by his father. In time he replaced his father at the head of the irregulars as well as in the tobacco business. Through his dealings in tobacco he came to meet a certain M. Léon of Marseille, who was the French consul in Kavala and who became a friend and maybe an associate. A story arose later on that Muhammad Ali had invited him to settle in Egypt but that Léon had died on the very day he was to embark for Egypt. That story is most likely apocryphal since it is too similar to a story invented about an Armenian – Karakehia – to ring true. It may have been invented to show the early links that Muhammad Ali had with the French, and adduced as a reason for inviting so many French technocrats to Egypt. It may simply have been a fabrication of one of his biographers, who invented numerous tales about him, that he may have encouraged as adding to his mystique.

At the age of seventeen, around 1787, Muhammad Ali, who had distinguished himself in a few skirmishes against recalcitrant peasants who had refused to pay their taxes, was summoned to Istanbul and given the command of a corvette to chase pirates in the Aegean Sea.³ Or at least that is the account given by one of his descendants. Why the son of a commander of irregulars should be handed the command of a corvette is never made clear. That too may have been invented to show that the man had, early in life, acquired naval experience. It would also help explain his desire to create a navy and a merchant marine, though one need hardly become a naval officer in order to appreciate the importance of a navy to a state. The Aegean experience was said to impress upon him the naval skill and ability of the Greek sailors who manned the pirate ships. Yet anyone who lived in the Mediterranean was well aware of the naval prowess of the Greeks – most of the Ottoman navy was manned by Greeks. One need hardly chase pirates in order to learn about the talents of the Greeks; it was quite sufficient to live in Kavala to acquire such information. Once again that story may

have arisen out of someone's fertile imagination rather than been based on factual evidence. On the other hand it may have been an Ottoman custom to use young men on naval patrol from time to time, especially when there was a lack of naval personnel.

What we do know as fact is that Muhammad Ali followed his father in becoming a soldier, and that he was involved in a number of skirmishes in which his guile and skill brought him to the attention of his superiors who may have recommended him for a higher command.

At about that time Muhammad Ali married a relatively affluent woman, Amina, who was a relative of the Chorbashi. Amina had earlier been legally married to another man, although the marriage had not been consummated in that the marriage contract had been signed but the husband had died before the pair had cohabited. The young widow was left something of a minor heiress when she married the future ruler of Egypt. That early marriage gave rise to a later fiction that Ibrahim was not Muhammad Ali's eldest son but the son of his wife by her former husband. The story seems to have spread around 1846, and is reported by Hekekyan in his diaries. He wrote, 'It appears to be pretty certain that Ibrahim is at most but adopted ... offspring of Muhammad Ali's illegal and premature embraces'⁴ yet on p. 215 of the same volume he writes that he heard Muhammad Ali speak of Ibrahim as his son. Such a tale was probably invented by the opposition to Ibrahim, a faction that had gathered round Abbas, Ibrahim's nephew and the next in line to the succession, with the intention of ousting Ibrahim in favour of Abbas. The tale was patently untrue, for Muhammad Ali in writing to the sultan asserted on several occasions that Ibrahim was his own first-born son.⁵

Amina bore Muhammad Ali three sons. Ibrahim was born in 1204/1789-90 in Nasratli in Drama where the family had fled from a plague epidemic that was ravaging Kavala. Ahmad Tussun was born in 1208/1793, and Ismail Kamil was born in 1210/1795. She also gave him two daughters, Tevhide, born in 1212/1797, and Nazli born in 1214/1799. The husband left for Egypt shortly after and the couple were separated for nearly a decade. Amina was the only legal wife that Muhammad Ali had during his lifetime, although he took on some eight to ten concubines and fathered a total of seventeen sons and thirteen daughters. His last two children were born when he was past his 63rd year, in 1833. One imaginative author credited Muhammad Ali with fathering ninety-five children; one would have assumed that thirty children were ample enough without tripling the number.

Among his sons, only Said, Abdal-Halim and Muhammad Ali the Younger outlived him, and among his daughters only his second oldest

daughter, Nazli, who was married to Muhammad Bey al-Defterdar. He was survived by several of his concubines. Amina must have been a formidable woman, for her husband had a fondness for her and treated her with respect. Her portrait, which used to hang in the Jawhara palace in the citadel before the palace burnt down, showed a handsome woman but something of a tyrant with beetling dark brows, darkened by kohl, meeting above her eyes in the fashion of the day, and a generally forbidding expression. That may have been the artist's vision of her, or her own awed expression at being painted. Their children were all handsome, as indeed were the rest of Muhammad Ali's progeny, with the exception of Abbas, who was marred by his permanently glowering expression, and Said by his corpulence.

Muhammad Ali was a short, stocky man with distinctive short forearms, a trait which his eldest son Ibrahim inherited from him. He had blond hair, deep-set hazel-grey eyes, a small mouth and beautiful hands. People immediately noticed his eyes, which were constantly animated. A. A. Paton, who met him when he was long past his prime, remarked '... if ever a man had an eye that denoted genius, Mohamed Ali was that person. Never dead nor quiescent, it was fascinating like that of a gazelle; or, in the hour of storm, fierce as an eagle's.'⁶ At around the same time, Cobden also visited Muhammad Ali and described his restless eyes. Cobden saw no genius in them, simply the eyes of a shopkeeper watching out for petty pilfering in his shop; to him there was nothing striking or handsome about the countenance of Muhammad Ali, and his eyes revealed neither moral nor intellectual grandeur. Even the man's heavy white beard did not please Cobden who claimed to have seen richer tufts on the chins of many among his subjects – which if true must have meant that many Egyptians were suffering from advanced hirsutism. Cobden, who was an adept in phrenology, tried to analyse the bumps on the ruler's head, presumably by looking through the man's wide turban, concluding that his cranium 'accords with the extraordinary force of character displayed by this successful soldier while a broad and massive forehead harmonizes with the powerful intellect he has displayed in his schemes of personal aggrandizement.'⁷ Cobden may be pardoned his comments when we know that he had an axe to grind with the ruler; despite his attitude, the picture of Muhammad Ali that emerges from both descriptions and from the portraits that are available is one of a handsome man with intense eyes that immediately attracted attention.

Muhammad Ali was impeccably clean; as Nubar and others have recounted, he shaved his head every day and spent a long time every morning bathing. Throughout his life he eschewed any but the simplest

attire, in deliberate contrast to the highly ornamented dress of his sons and the members of his court.

All those who met Muhammad Ali, whether natives or aliens, commented on his great charm, and above all on his exquisite politeness, the hallmark of a true Ottoman gentleman. One must keep in mind that Ottoman society did have a degree of social mobility, and high officials of state were not necessarily from affluent families. Court manners and rules of etiquette were the characteristic of people in authority, but Muhammad Ali seemed to his viewers to surpass the normal courtesy, which may well have been the case. His correspondence, on the other hand, revealed another side that was biting, sarcastic and extremely outspoken, if not downright rude. But then that correspondence was usually addressed to subordinates who had erred, for when they performed their duties he praised them. Most of the men in his administration at one time or another earned the epithet of donkey (*eshek*), his favourite expression. This alternated with 'pig son of a pig' (*khanzir ibn khanzir*), if addressed to an Egyptian, whom he considered inferior to Turks and therefore entitled to a more insulting epithet. All bureaucrats were threatened frequently with being hurled into the sea or river, buried alive, beheaded, impaled, whipped, or having the hairs of their beards plucked out one by one. None of these threats were carried out save in the rarest of instances, but they kept his men alert, for they never knew if or when the axe would fall. It must have been an effective technique because his men went in constant fear of him.

In contrast to Ibrahim's loud guffaw, Muhammad Ali had a short dry chuckle. He moved so softly and quietly that he frequently startled the palace servants by appearing suddenly when he was least expected, and so built up his reputation for omniscience. Ibrahim, on the other hand, could be heard coming a long distance away with his heavy martial tramping. One Frenchman given to *bons mots* had, in contrasting the two men, called them the fox and the lion. If the father had some of the qualities of the fox – guile, adroitness at avoiding dangerous situations, agility of mind – he also had some of the qualities of the lion as well. He had courage, magnanimity, and loomed larger than life in the eyes of his supporters and opponents. He also was possessed of a degree of humaneness that Ibrahim did not have.

In his youth in Kavala, his service with the irregulars merited a military reputation. When the town of Kavala was ordered by the Ottoman authorities to provide 300 men to join the Albanian contingent that was forming part of the Ottoman expedition to Egypt against the French, Muhammad Ali was appointed second-in-command to Ali Agha, the son of the local governor.

Family legend has it that Muhammad Ali was reluctant to leave Kavala for Egypt until he met a local mystic who encouraged him to go, claiming to see victory written on his brow. Once again mythology clouded the bare fact that the man probably was reluctant to depart because he did not have the necessary funds with which to outfit himself. Though a merchant, he was not a wealthy one and did not have the ready cash to equip himself for a campaign. Eventually he found an Armenian merchant named Aghiazar Amira who lent him a sufficient sum of money, even though he was a bad risk, going as he was to distant shores to fight a war whose outcome was unknown. Muhammad Ali sailed away accompanied by 'his brother Ahmad'⁸ to meet fame and fortune. (The first mention we have of a brother occurs in Jabarti's chronicles when he mentions that 'Ahmad Bey, brother' of Muhammad Ali headed towards Khan al-Khalili.) When Muhammad Ali had made his mark he repaid Aghiazar Amira for his faith in him by making him *sarraf*, or business manager, in Istanbul.

From scattered references concerning Muhammad Ali's life outside Egypt we can deduce only a smattering of details. Perhaps there was this lack of information about his early years simply because he was illiterate until his middle age and not given to writing things down. On the other hand he may have wished his past to remain shrouded in mystery, and deliberately refrained from giving the curious any details other than the bare minimum.

What we do know of him is that he did not forget favours, and repaid them whenever he was able to do so and at the earliest occasion. We can also infer his liking for foreigners, and minorities, whom he regarded as trustworthy men of business. He admired Greek, Armenian and French businessmen, with whom he may have had working relationships in the course of his tobacco-trading career. When he ruled Egypt he invited a number of Greek businessmen to settle in Egypt and gave them his patronage; he even turned a blind eye when he knew that they were gathering funds in Egypt to sustain the Greek war of independence against their common suzerain, the sultan. He surrounded himself with Armenian secretaries and translators, and, later on, with French technocrats, British experts and merchants and Italian physicians. In this he was different from the mass of the Ottomans who preferred to deal with their own nationals. While this may have been a deliberate attempt to imitate the early sultans who gathered to their courts talent of whatever origin and whatever nationality, we must also realize that there was a good reason for him to fill his court with foreigners. Muhammad Ali was a pragmatist who made use of whatever talent was available; also he had no racial or religious prejudice. Being a clear-sighted man he realized

that the collaborators he needed could not be found among his own people and so he set out to educate his people, but in the meantime he made use of the abilities of the Greeks and Armenians who were co-nationals in the empire. The French had always traded in the Mediterranean so their activity was necessary, and after 1815 military and technical experts from France were readily available. His liking for French talent may also have stemmed from the tremendous admiration he had for Napoleon.

We can deduce that, although Muhammad Ali had been a merchant, he had not been an affluent one: he would otherwise have paid someone else to go and fight the war in Egypt in his place, or he would have had the money to equip himself. That he was involved in trade would lead us to assume some knowledge of commerce and trading practices, for tobacco was an important commodity and, while Kavala was not a major port, it was nonetheless on the major trade route and in the heart of the tobacco country where a great deal of buying and selling went on. In brief, Muhammad Ali's background included both military and perhaps naval experience, a mercantile experience – albeit of a minor nature, and one that may not have been too successful – and an acquaintance with ethnic minorities of several kinds.

The contingent from Kavala joined the Ottoman forces to sail to Egypt where they landed on 8 March 1801. Family history claimed that the sea was so rough that the forces could not land for a week. The sea in the Bay of Abuqir is generally rough and if a meltemi wind was blowing it would have been impossible for the forces to land without sustaining severe casualties. Family history recounts that the first casualty was Ali Agha, the leader of the contingent from Kavala, who became violently sea-sick and decided to go home on the next ship, leaving Muhammad Ali to head the contingent. While one can readily believe that bad weather conditions delayed landing the troops, it is hardly credible that a man who had spent his life in a port town and who presumably must have done a lot of sailing would be subject to seasickness. Even if we were to assume that, like Lord Nelson, he indeed suffered from such an ailment, it is highly unlikely that, having reached land after a nasty experience on sea, he would venture straight back to sea again to go home. What is more likely is that Muhammad Ali's talents soon manoeuvred him to the top position of command in his contingent. His personable presence and his undoubted ability in a skirmish against the French forces soon brought him to the attention of the Ottoman Capitan Pasha, Mehmet Khusrev, who in 1801 appointed him *serchesme*, or commander of a thousand, that is, a major, in common parlance.⁹ Jabarti in his first mention of Muhammad Ali refers to him as

leader of the Ottoman soldiers ('Amir al-asakir al-Uthmaniyya'), while Nicolas Turc called him by his proper title of Albanian Major ('Bin-bashi Arnaut').¹⁰ Muhammad Ali very rapidly gained further recognition as an able and efficient commander, and rose rapidly in the ranks until he became second-in-command of the entire Albanian contingent, not only of that from Kavala.

All the Albanians in the Ottoman forces in Egypt formed a bloc within the army that was distinct and separate from the rest of the men, and they were under the command of an officer named Tahir. The Albanians were 'mercenaries' of the Ottomans from at least the second half of the seventeenth century, and were on occasion used to balance the unreliable janissaries and other *ojakat*. Because they were irregulars, they tended to retain their tribal structure, as indeed did the Maghribi irregulars who served in mamluk armies and later under Muhammad Ali, and the bedouin irregulars. The Albanians spoke little Turkish and disliked the Ottoman janissaries, who in turn despised the Albanians as lawless rabble and 'treated them like servants'. According to Jabarti, the Albanians were more uncouth and unruly than the Ottomans. 'Most of them do not fast the month of Ramadan', he wrote in disgust, 'and no one can tell what belief they adhere to or what sect or what order. The easiest thing for them to do is to kill, to seize the property of others and to disobey their superiors and generals ... May God eradicate them all', he ended viciously.¹¹

Because of the tribal character of the Albanian troops and the demise of their superior officers, none but an Albanian could lead these troops, and this, as well as his qualities and charisma, accounts for Muhammad Ali's swift rise in rank. His promotion within such a short span of time was indeed remarkable and bespoke the talents of the man, although one must also acknowledge the role of chance.

The fact that Muhammad Ali was an Albanian, a member of a linguistic and ethnic minority group within the Ottoman family, is significant. The Albanians spoke a different language from Turkish, yet they were Muslims, and were not members of the despised Arab fallahin. Much like the Cherkess, who formed much of the Ottoman fighting elite, they were mountain people, fierce, undisciplined, aggressive and valorous. They had no cultural identity other than the Ottoman one. That last factor may help us to understand why Muhammad Ali patterned himself on an Ottoman gentleman, acquired the manners and exquisite politeness of a man brought up in court, and clung to his Ottoman identity even when he despised, or claimed to despise, the Ottomans. He obviously had a love-hate relationship with the Ottomans and feared a loss of identity, which would explain his ambivalence

towards them and his hesitation to make any radical break with the Ottoman system of government. Finally, it also explains his attempt to revive Ottoman culture in Egypt, publishing the classics of the golden age, the sixteenth century, in the Bulaq press so that his supporters could continue a polished cultural tradition and not feel divorced from their roots – their Ottoman roots. Muhammad Ali could have identified with the ‘speakers of Arabic’, the inhabitants of Egypt, as did his son Ibrahim, but, as a member of one minority group, it was too much of a step for him to join another and he preferred to cling to his Ottoman identity. Much later in his reign he decided to break with the Ottomans, in political terms; but by then he had little choice left.

Within his family circle Muhammad Ali was an affectionate and caring father. He may have treated his children with little overt warmth, but he did give them a great deal of attention especially in matters of education. At the same time, because he had such a suspicious nature, he set spies in their households to report to him their every action. Bowring claimed that he had told him at one time, ‘I doubted the aptitude of my own children – even of Ibrahim Pasha – but I have now learned that he is to be relied on and fully trusted.’¹² It was not their aptitude that he mistrusted, but their loyalty to himself, as we shall see later. Because of his keen judgement of character his suspicions did not leave room for paranoia to develop, as in the case of Sultan Abd al-Hamid for instance, but they did make him careful in his relationships with people, even members of his own family. He told Bowring, ‘I am often deceived and know I am deceived – whereas many are deceived but do not know it.’ In an artless fashion he added, ‘I am sometimes deceived by others and I sometimes deceive myself, but the deceit does not last long.’

Muhammad Ali was a fox – crafty, clever and cautious, but he was also a charming man with ‘high breeding and winning manners’, as the British consul described him to Lord Palmerston.¹³ Being a pragmatist he could be counted upon to make the best of bad situations. Another British consul, Salt, was to write about him, ‘The Pasha’s greatest resources rest on his own superior talents – fertile in means and singularly skilled in the art of leading men, he has always hitherto been seen to rise greater for the obstacles he has had to encounter.’

The last trait can best be described as tenacity, of hanging on through the toughest times until the tide turned or he had turned adversity to his advantage. He believed that he was destined to greatness, not because a fortune-teller had so predicted, as one of his biographers claimed, but because he believed in his own gifts and trusted his ability to succeed – a belief that was fully justified by events. For as Consul Murray said,

'without any of the advantages of birth, or fortune, he carved his way to power and fame by his own indomitable courage, perseverance and sagacity'.¹⁴ To these one can add native intelligence, farsightedness and vision. His vision for the future of Egypt was remarkably avant-garde for his time, and is the mark that distinguished him from those who came before him and those who came after him, and set him apart as one of the most remarkable rulers that country has ever had.

One man does not rule a country by himself, but one man's vision, when he rules a country, can give it shape and direction, and can coordinate the various ideas and currents which he is fed by his entourage and by the circumstances of the land. How he chose that entourage and how it chose him determined the manner in which the country was to be run and the directions it would take in economic and political terms. But throughout it all one must keep in mind that Egypt was one element in a sea of conflicting political and economic currents and, when all is said and done, the province was not such a free agent to carve destiny as she willed. No country is. The history of any country is determined by the internal dynamics of that country and also by the external influences that mould and batter it depending on international requirements and forces. Without an understanding of these two forces, the centripetal and centrifugal, it would be difficult to understand the unfolding of events.

Muhammad Ali was a military man; it was normal for him to destroy his enemies by military means, as he did the mamluks. But Muhammad Ali was also an astute and clever politician who first tried to buy or defuse his enemies and only used force as a last resort. In general he was uneasy about the use of force, for he believed that it left a bad aftertaste, whereas persuasion was ever the better alternative. Even his direst enemies, the mamluks, were eventually coopted into his service. That flexible approach to problem solving went a long way to making his regime popular among the elite and acceptable to the masses. What it did not succeed in doing, however, was making itself palatable to some of the powers, and this point will be dealt with later.

The rule of the elite in Egypt over the past ages, as we have tried to show in the brief introduction, had been tempered by collaboration between them and certain classes in society, such as the *tujjar* or, in the case of the janissaries, the artisans. No rule could survive that did not take into account the inner currents within the country. Muhammad Ali learned that lesson well, as we shall see, during his early days of struggle for survival, and he kept himself informed of the mood of the masses throughout his rule, so that rumours of discontent reached him and he could allay it or brutally dominate it.

The government of Egypt in those days could be described as the outcome of a struggle between two unequal forces. While the ruler passed down orders to the population, or at least the ruler and his bureaucrats together imposed them from above, the population was pushing from below. The interaction of these two forces gave the country the historic shape it took. The image of Egyptian government that has been presented by historians is that of an absolute autocracy, with a centralized authority at the helm imposing its dictates on a downtrodden and helpless population. Occasionally we are told that that autocratic government had to deal with uprisings and revolts which arose in consequence of its brutal acts against the population. We are rarely, if ever, given any insight into the relationship of that population with the ruling elite, a relationship which on some occasions led it to break out in violent resistance but which at others led it to accept that rule as offering an acceptable alternative to the past forms of government. We shall attempt to remedy this deficiency in later chapters, but as a point of departure we must take it for granted that populations react to their governments, and that their reactions, weak or strong as the case may be, are effective and carry with them counter-reactions from the elite. Peaceful changes or violent reactions arise in consequence, but the elite does respond to pressure from the masses. An elite that is more perceptive to that pressure produces a government that is acceptable, so that the degree of its response is a measure of the successful rule of a government. We have seen that the last decades of mamluk rule aroused responses which caused violent upheavals in society, and which eventually led to a rejection of mamluk rule for Egypt.

The dysfunction in mamluk society must be clearly seen as a two-fold one, one aspect arising from mamluk abuse of authority, and one arising as a consequence of world pressures on Egyptian economy in general. The same pressures were to operate on Muhammad Ali. How these were dealt with is the history of the next few decades. The remarkable *tour de force* that pushed a country from a state of near economic collapse into a rich and thriving land has been credited to Muhammad Ali's genius and foresight. We must also remind ourselves that it could only have been accomplished with the cooperation of the Egyptian population and its intrepid stance in the face of ordeals, as well as its capacity for recuperation from past wounds, for Egypt made Muhammad Ali just as he helped Egypt to recover from its desperate state in the eighteenth century.

A country without a master

The Anglo-Ottoman forces landed in Egypt on 8 March 1801. Three months later, on 27 June, Cairo fell and the French forces evacuated the city a week later. The minute the Ottoman forces entered Cairo the soldiers rushed to the *aswaq* and placed their arms and colours on coffee-houses, shops and bath houses. Such actions did not reassure the owners of these establishments, who realized that the soldiers meant to share in their profits. Next the Turks and the Albanians took to trading. They went outside the city to meet the fallahin bringing in their supplies for sale, bought all the produce at a low price, which the fallahin were too scared to refuse, and then brought it into the city and resold it to the city merchants at a great profit.¹

By then the Ottoman forces were clearly split into two factions, Albanians and Turks, neither of which obeyed its superior officers. Likewise the mamluks were split into two factions, one under Alfi Bey, the *enfant terrible*, and the other nominally led by Ibrahim Bey who, with age, had turned over the command to Uthman Bey Bardissi. At first the mamluks cooperated with the Ottoman forces and were led to believe that they would be restored to their former functions and positions of influence within the land. Alfi Bey was sent off to collect the taxes of Upper Egypt, where he quickly became a byword for rapacity. According to Jabarti, the inhabitants of Upper Egypt fled to Cairo as a means of avoiding Alfi's despotism and his imposition of all kinds of vexatious taxes. He allegedly dispossessed people of their rightful property and confiscated the property of all those who were deceased, leaving the heirs destitute.² His faction and that of Uthman Bardissi were at loggerheads and reached the point of trying to assassinate each other. The internecine differences between the mamluks were so obviously grave that the Ottomans had little illusions left about them, and in their turn tried to exterminate both factions.

The only group left with some illusions about the mamluks were the British forces. They preferred to believe that the mamluks had a greater right to Egypt than had the Turks. More importantly, they knew the

mamluks were more amenable to commercial pressures and easier to manipulate. They even claimed that the mamluks were superior in honour to the Turks. One of the French émigrés in the service of the British said, 'What superiority the Mamluks had compared to the Turks: frank, loyal, generous and brave, everything was in their favour. We looked upon them as one of us so to speak.'³ Such misguided beliefs led to an error of judgement, but they explain why the British saved the mamluks from extermination by the Turks,⁴ then gave them arms and ammunition on condition they withdrew to Upper Egypt, which they did.⁵ The British forces evacuated Egypt and took Alfi Bey with them to England, where he spent a year ostensibly as the representative of the mamluk beys, who were only too pleased to get rid of him.

Initial Ottoman support for the mamluks may only have been a ruse on their part from the very beginning. Sebastiani, who returned to Egypt in 1802, reported that the Ottoman governor, Khusrev Pasha, had given battle to the mamluks five times. When Sebastiani tried to intervene in favour of the mamluks, Khusrev informed him that he had 'the most positive orders from the court to carry out a war of extermination against the beys, to thrust aside ruthlessly any attempts to come to an understanding with them'. Sebastiani was shown two imperial orders. In one of them the Sultan ordered his governor 'to kill all the mamluks who could be found in Egypt', and in the other he saw instructions to the governor to 'humiliate the leading shaikhs, to divest them of their wealth, and to strike in particular shaikhs al-Bakri and al-Sadat'.⁶ If Sebastiani knew of these instructions there is little reason to suppose that the ulama did not, which accounts for their animosity towards the Ottomans and their rapprochement with Muhammad Ali.

The year 1802-3 was a particularly bad year for the Egyptians, whose hopes for peace and security once the French had been ousted were dashed by the new brigands they had at first welcomed as liberators. The Ottoman soldiery speculated in foodstuffs, cheated the merchants, threw people out of their houses in order to move in themselves, and if the owners objected they beat them up. The soldiers used the doors and windows of houses for firewood. When they had entirely gutted the house, they would move out into new quarters and start all over again. Whole areas of the city were thus destroyed, first through cannon and the normal devastation of war, then through the actions of the soldiers. These molested women in the streets and the baths, grabbed the mounts of the passers-by, took all the donkeys from the guild of water sellers, who perforce had to carry the water-skins on their backs and so charged more, and kidnapped people whom they held for ransom. None dared

walk the streets after sunset.⁷ The citizens openly regretted the French occupation, so bitter had they become towards the new occupants.

The lawlessness of the ten thousand Ottoman soldiery was in part based on the fact that they had not been paid their salaries and had to resort to looting to satisfy their wants. Beyond that they came to look upon Egypt as a country without a master and ripe for plunder.

The mamluks, whose numbers had been greatly depleted through war and plague, and who were reduced to 1,200 mamluks and some 5,000 bedouin irregulars, were unable either to dominate or expel the Ottomans. In the first place the Ottomans had placed an embargo on the export of mamluks to Egypt in 1802, and in the second place the mamluks had no funds with which to pay any mercenaries. Yet there were enough mamluks and they remained sufficiently strong to resist being expelled or exterminated by the Turks.

Money had become scarce in the land. Trade and commerce had been at a standstill for some time, and the population, forced to pay so many taxes to so many different military denominations – French, beys, Turks, Albanians – was bled dry. While the Ottomans looked on Egypt as a prey, the mamluks also had plundered it, but in the past they had been the sole, responsible rulers; now that responsibility was curtailed and in jeopardy. Caught as they were between the devil and the deep blue sea, the Egyptians found little to look forward to, either in an Ottoman occupation or in a return to mamluk rule. The time seemed ripe for radical change. These circumstances catapulted Muhammad Ali from a position of relative obscurity into a position of power, while his own native talents allowed him to do the rest, and to rise to the rank of contender for sole authority.

The new governor of Egypt, Khusrev Pasha, was a bloodthirsty, rapacious man. Worse still, he was a bad administrator who imposed arbitrary and unreasonable taxes on a population that was on its last legs.⁸ Among other taxes he imposed a house tax equal to three years' rent on private dwellings. At the same time he committed the cardinal sin of not paying the soldiers for five months, and especially the Albanians. These last were led by Muhammad Ali in a demonstration to demand their back pay. The governor merely countered with a remark that the Albanians were worthless and should be sent back to their country or he would have them all killed.⁹ The Albanians, 6,000 men who formed the bulk of the Ottoman army, were not given satisfaction, and rioted. The governor retaliated and trained cannon from the citadel on them.

This incident was recounted by two eye-witnesses, Jabarti and Nicolas Turc, who both claimed that it had been fomented by Muham-

mad Ali as part of his power play against the pasha. Muhammad Ali had certainly not created the grievances that had led up to the mutiny, but he may have encouraged the soldiers to mutiny because 'he had behind him all of the army'.¹⁰

The local population for some time had sensed trouble brewing and had armed themselves for an impending uprising. The governor unsuccessfully tried to coopt the local population against the soldiers, but meanwhile Tahir Pasha, the head of the Albanian forces, captured the citadel and trained cannon on the governor's house. Reports claimed that Khusrev was so overcome with shock that he fainted. Both factions fought in the streets for dominion over the city. A day later Khusrev gathered his goods and his women and secretly left the city for Damietta, after a rule of 15 months and 21 days. Tahir Pasha was elected *qaim-maqam*, or temporary governor, until an imperial *firman* arrived naming him the new governor.

According to Nicolas Turc, Tahir had originally been a brigand, and loved to kill. The man must have been particularly ghastly because three weeks later he was murdered by two janissaries. Before his death, however, he had sought and obtained an alliance with the Ibrahim/Bardissi faction of mamluks. That he had effected that rapprochement on his own cognizance is doubtful. One suspects that it was Muhammad Ali's own idea to create a coalition between Albanians and mamluks against Turks. When a new governor was appointed after Tahir's assassination, the mamluks surrounded the city and gave the governor a 24-hour ultimatum to get out of town. The victorious Albanian/mamluk faction entered the city and had criers exhort the population to stay calm and return to their tasks, 'in the name of Ibrahim Bey and Muhammad Ali'.¹¹ The latter by then had become commander-in-chief of the Albanian troops. From then Muhammad Ali was to become involved in a series of temporary alliances and factional struggles which were eventually to raise him to the ranks of contender for the governorship of Egypt.

A force led by Bardissi and Muhammad Ali headed for Damietta to capture Khusrev Pasha. Khusrev held out, in consequence of which resistance the city of Damietta was utterly devastated before he could be captured and brought back to Cairo. A *firman* arrived from Istanbul deposing Khusrev and naming Jazairli Ali Pasha *wali*, or governor.

Jazairli Ali Pasha arrived in Alexandria armed with orders to banish the Albanians from Egypt. However, Ibrahim Bey informed him that according to time-honoured mamluk custom he would be allowed into Cairo with an escort of only 200 men. Quite understandably Jazairli Ali hesitated to abandon the security of Alexandria, and Ibrahim was left

Egypt in the reign of Muhammad Ali

master of Cairo. Cairo was in bad straits and threatened with famine because the mamluks had cornered the grain market and stockpiled supplies. Bardissi objected to these actions and ordered Muhammad Ali to break into the grain stores and distribute grain to the population. Muhammad Ali took the credit for this move and the population came to look upon him as their hero. Muhammad Ali next convinced Bardissi to pay arrears of salary to the soldiers. He may have known that in order to do that the beys would have to levy a heavy tax on the population, who would resist such a measure. By then he and Bardissi were in control of Cairo, and if he could get rid of Bardissi that would leave him master of the capital. A heavy tax coming then was at the worst possible time. The Nile was obviously going to be a low one that year, which implied a possible famine. Conditions were so bad that, according to Turk, 'there was cause to turn white the hair of a new born babe'.¹²

The mamluks reaped the largest share of the city's odium, which was being heaped indiscriminately on all warring factions. When Ibrahim Bey gathered the ulama and asked them to pray for succour and a way out of their difficulties, Shaikh al-Arusi bluntly retorted,

God will not answer your prayers nor those of your subjects, for tyranny, injustice and debauchery reign over the entire country. Our rulers are not true Muslims. Had they been sincere believers, I mean men impassioned, cherishing justice and integrity, they would abolish indirect taxes and irregular contributions and suppress arbitrary taxation, [they would] reassure the population ... and instil confidence in the inhabitants ... [instead] under their government unrest and exactions spread, vice appears openly ... theft is committed in public and no one intervenes ... How do you expect God to receive our supplications and prayers when the mamluks and soldiers day and night pillage, ravage, hit, kill, without fearing chief or notable?¹³

The ulama, those proponents of law and order, the natural leaders of the people, had reached the end of their tether. More calamity was to be heaped upon them before they were moved to action instead of standing aside as observers.

On 27 February 1804 a military revolt once again broke out among the soldiers, who demanded their wages which had fallen in arrears. An extraordinary tax was imposed on the population, who this time rioted. They took to the streets shouting slogans against Bardissi saying, 'Bardissi what will you extract from us who are bankrupt?' ('ish ta'kudh min taffissi ya Bardissi'), and cursed mamluks and soldiers singly and collectively in public. Muhammad Ali sent his men to the various quarters of the city to prevent the soldiers from looting, and decreed that any soldier found molesting a civilian was to be arrested. From then on, wrote Turc, his star shone brightly,¹⁴ especially when he had

Bardissi abolish the tax. Jabarti presented a more jaundiced account of events. He claimed that the unrest was due to Muhammad Ali's machinations and intrigues, that Muhammad Ali had roused the soldiers against Khusrev and undermined him through Tahir Pasha and the Albanians. He destroyed Tahir Pasha by manipulating the janissaries, and destroyed Tahir's successors with the assistance of the mamluk beys. Jabarti added that Bardissi and Muhammad Ali had signed a blood pact, that Bardissi had been seduced by Muhammad Ali and obeyed him implicitly, doing his work while Muhammad Ali remained in the background and only stepped out to oppose the levy of a new tax and appear a hero in the eyes of a duped populace.¹⁵

Jabarti's account, if true, and one assumes that there is a strong element of truth in it, shows how cleverly Muhammad Ali had manipulated his rivals, set them at each other's throats, himself to emerge unscathed and something of a popular figure. Perhaps his native associates from among the ulama and the *tujjar* had given him guidelines for behaviour which followed the early pattern of an alliance between the military, the *tujjar* and the ulama, for that would more clearly explain his next move.

Bardissi, outraged at the revolt of the masses, swore revenge against them and gathered the ulama to scold them for allowing it to occur. At the meeting, Muhammad Ali, who felt that Bardissi had outlived his usefulness, and who may indeed have manipulated the tax as a means of ridding himself of Bardissi, took the side of the ulama and the masses and rebuked Bardissi for his actions. 'Our pay should come from the state, and not from the population', he said. 'Pay the troops out of your funds and do not pressure your subjects ... We will not allow you to force these people to contribute',¹⁶ he said insidiously, and stalked out of the meeting. By so doing he demonstrated to the ulama that he was not afraid to show solidarity with the people, and that he was basically hostile to the mamluks.

The struggles in Egypt between the various factions were clearly a struggle for supremacy but they were also motivated by economic wants. Coming on the heels of a prolonged financial and agricultural crisis, Egypt could not support both mamluk and Ottoman forces together. One of the warring factions needed to go to make room for one ruling elite. To the native elite it was becoming increasingly obvious that the mamluks had outlived their usefulness. They were becoming a liability and would have to go. The alternative lay in the direction of a strong man, a second Ali Bey al-Kabir, who had troops to back him, and who presented a viable alternative to the chaos of the past five years. That man was clearly Muhammad Ali.

After the incident between Bardissi and Muhammad Ali, the Albanian troops attacked the mamluks who fled the city, much to the delight of the population which sacked their houses and gave Muhammad Ali credit for having got rid of them and for having opposed the levy of an exorbitant tax. Muhammad Ali turned to the ulama and the civic leaders and sought to ingratiate himself further with them. Especially did he seek the friendship of Sayyid Umar Makram, the marshal of the notables (*naqib al-ashraf*) and a powerful figure in Cairo.¹⁷ Makram was the only one among the ulama who had strong leadership qualities and who was not afraid to shoulder responsibility.

Within three years of landing in Egypt as junior officer in the Ottoman army, Muhammad Ali had become commander of these very forces, and had won the gratitude and recognition of the Cairene population and their natural leaders. He emerged from his power play with the reputation of an adroit politician, an efficient soldier, a reasonable man, and a dangerous opponent.

Once Muhammad Ali had sided with the Egyptian population, fighting between his forces and the mamluk beys who controlled the grain of Upper Egypt, and could starve Cairo, broke out. The bedouin allies of the mamluks pillaged the trading caravans, so merchants were unable to bring their goods into the capital. Worse was yet to come.

The Porte appointed a new governor in Egypt, Khurshid Pasha, who, finding his authority minimal because he had no forces at his command, tried importing a military bloc of his own. He called in around 5,000 troops from Syria, the redoubtable Delhis or 'madmen', who were notorious for their high astrakhan bonnets and their ferocity. Kurdish, Druze and Matawilli in origin,¹⁸ they were dreaded by the local population and by the Albanian troops as well. The head of the Delhis was the brother of the man who, having assassinated Tahir, had been assassinated by the revengeful Albanians, who now expected retaliation for their action.

It has been suggested that by his actions Muhammad Ali may have been attempting to restore the old order, and replace chaos and civil strife with a peaceful return to the *status quo ante*, that he was, in fact, not attempting to impose change or revolution, but was practising the 'politics of the notables' as was being practised in other Ottoman cities like Damascus, Aleppo and Acre.¹⁹ If such a view is correct, then one must believe that Muhammad Ali in 1805 came to power through a desire to restore the old modes of authority, modes that had radically changed over the past fifty years. While this may be the case, it would seem to me that he planned more than to restore the power of the sultan and Porte and become their man in Egypt. At first he may have reacted

to events in a deadly game of survival, but by 1806 it was perfectly clear that he had a definite goal in mind – to become independent. The details of how to achieve his ends were filled in later when it became clear to him that he would have to dominate the mamluks and rid the country of local Ottoman opposition in order to substitute himself as sole ruler in the land. He also intended to defy the Ottomans and force their acquiescence, all of which may have been in keeping with the politics of the notables, but was also what one might expect of a man intent on becoming the independent ruler of a state he believed he had won by the sword, an act that had precedents in the Ottoman empire, e.g. Ali Pasha Tepelen.

As far as the Egyptian population was concerned, it seems inconceivable that they would risk so much, as they did in supporting Muhammad Ali, to restore a form of government that had existed in the past and which few of them could even remember, or that they would do so in order to bring back the mamluk form of rule. The mamluks had plagued them for past decades and their misrule had brought about a foreign occupation, followed by a Turkish conquest that was much worse. The population of Cairo was trying to break the yoke of the past, not tie the noose tighter round their necks again. Their support for Muhammad Ali was the last act in a conflict against the mamluks which had started prior to the French occupation. They were not so much supporting Muhammad Ali as trying to be rid of the mamluks through him. That explains why the unemployed masses, created prior to the French occupation and as a consequence of that occupation – when artisans were thrown out of work for lack of imported raw materials – and the working artisans, who were bilked by the Ottoman soldiery skimming off their hard-earned livelihood, all united behind Muhammad Ali against the ‘haves’, even though some of the native elite also joined in for fear of losing what they had.

The *tujjar* and the ulama, the native elite, supported Muhammad Ali for different reasons. They saw him as the exponent of law and order, an Ali Bey, who would bring stability to the country and restore the military-mercantile alliance of the past. Maybe the artisans and the masses saw in Muhammad Ali the possibility of a return to an earlier artisan-military alliance, although they had rejected the alliance with the newly arrived Ottoman *ojakat*, which offered them bitter exploitation and no protection. Muhammad Ali defended the population from such exploitation, or at least he seemed to defend the populace, who rallied round him. Those who supported Muhammad Ali therefore did so for different reasons: the elites for their own vested interests, the people because he promised a new departure for them.

Whatever else Muhammad Ali may have been trying to do in Egypt it seems perfectly clear that he was not trying to re-establish Ottoman authority but was seeking to modify the old order and to establish the authority of one man, himself. Given his cautious nature, and the general precariousness of his condition, he had to go one step at a time, and hide his motives until he had made a clean sweep of all opposition and was left in sole command of the country. This was not to happen until 1811. Until then he pretended to be an obedient servant of the Porte, while seeking to consolidate his own position as ruler in Egypt.

Once the Delhis arrived in Cairo, rather than fly to assist Muhammad Ali who had besieged the city of Minia in Upper Egypt, they remained in Cairo until their pay had been issued them, and spread the rumour that they had come in order to evict the Albanians. One more incubus was added to the rest who were sucking Egypt to death.

Muhammad Ali captured Minia and returned to Cairo since his men also were clamouring for pay. Cairo was teeming with some eight to nine thousand soldiers all loudly demanding payment. Tension was rising. The population closed their shops and cowered in their homes expecting an outburst. Drovetti, the French consul in Egypt, writing home to Paris expressed his unease about the political situation. He pointed out that Muhammad Ali 'has always had designs on the *pashalik* of Cairo, and all his actions, which seemed to be directed in favour of the Porte, bear the imprint of his ambition to attain greater power'.²⁰ The relations between Muhammad Ali and the governor were strained when the former demanded an accounting for all the funds received into the treasury.

Meanwhile, the local notables were busy consulting with Muhammad Ali, against the express orders of the governor. The notables, ulama, and merchants, led by Sayyid Umar Makram, were making common cause with Muhammad Ali against what they perceived to be their common danger: the breakdown in public security, the prevalent chaos in government, the dissolution of trade after four years of civil war and three years of an alien occupation. The notables were all men of vested interests. The ulama were also landowners, or *multazimun*, and were involved with the *tujjar* in trade. Extortions and forced loans had placed a heavy burden on them as well as on the population, and they saw their property disintegrating before their very eyes, for they could neither collect rents as *multazimun* nor acquire income from trade. The mamluks had recently demonstrated their inability to govern, being too taken up with their own internecine squabbles to unite and rule the land. The governor and his men were rapacious and, worse, ineffective; and the latter were uncontrollable. The only man who appeared capable,

energetic and, above all, reasonable was Muhammad Ali. Even more in his favour was his definite affinity with the merchants – witness his friendship with the head of the merchants' guild, al-Mahruqi and with al-Muwailhi, a Red Sea merchant – and his deference towards the men of religion. Sayyid Umar Makram had always been an active politician and an efficient organizer of the masses. As *naqib al-ashraf* he had put his influence to good use in 1798 when he organized the artisans of Cairo into a militia to defend the city when the mamluks deserted it. In 1800 he had galvanized popular resistance against the French in an uprising. Anyone who needed the power of the mob had to win Umar Makram to his cause, or to win Shaikh al-Sadat. Shaikh al-Sadat was head of the sufi orders in Egypt and could rouse every able-bodied male in the city to action. Both he and Shaikh al-Bakri headed influential sufi fraternities and were considered the two most powerful men in the city, which explains why the Ottomans gave orders that they were to be humiliated and dispossessed. Their friendship was actively sought by Muhammad Ali, while they, being at the end of their financial resources, were looking for an alternative to the present chaos. It was inevitable that the ambitious general, the activist leader and the notables should pool their resources against a common enemy.

Early in May the Delhis ran amok. They kidnapped, raped, killed and looted at will. The inhabitants of Old Cairo, where the Delhis were quartered, appealed to the ulama to save them. In high indignation the ulama appealed to the governor to stop the Delhis, but the Delhis paid no attention to him. The ulama ordered the gates of al-Azhar mosque closed, a signal of distress, and criers went round the *aswaq* calling 'distress'. All the shops were closed and the population prepared itself for a confrontation. The governor descended from the citadel to placate the ulama and was showered with stones by the mob. Panic swept the city while the ulama deliberated.

In the midst of this tense situation a messenger arrived from Istanbul bearing a *firman* appointing Muhammad Ali governor of Jidda – a means of getting rid of him by kicking him upstairs to fight the Wahhabis in the Hijaz. By then Ottoman administration in Istanbul had realized the danger of the general's continued presence in Egypt. They granted him the title of pasha and tried to get him out of the country with a promotion as governor. By so doing the Ottomans played right into his hand. During his official ceremony of investiture the soldiers rioted and demanded their pay from him. He calmly answered 'Here is your governor. Ask him for your money', and left, distributing coins to the populace who proclaimed him governor of Egypt. The soldiers attacked the governor, who managed to escape and imposed a forced

contribution on al-Mahruqi and Girgis al-Gawhari, both friends of Muhammad Ali and prominent merchants. Rumours spread that the governor was going to tax the entire country as the French had done.

Drovetti commented that the Ottoman governor had to 'struggle against the wiles of a man as ambitious as he was enterprising who, skilful in the art of intrigue, has for him the force of public opinion and arms. This astute man [Muhammad Ali] ... wishes to spread discontent and cut a path to the throne without seeming to want to do so.'²¹ Drovetti believed that Muhammad Ali controlled public opinion through his friendship with the local leaders and that he could easily seize power, but being Machiavellian he wished to seem chosen 'by the voice of the people'. He wished to gain the position he coveted, the approval of the notables for all his projects and also make himself indispensable to the Ottoman government by restoring authority to the country. Writing to Mengin, the French agent in Cairo, Drovetti in Alexandria said he believed Muhammad Ali coveted the *pashalik* of Egypt, but wanted it without firing a shot and without incurring the displeasure of the Porte. He wished to seize power through the goodwill of the ulama and the people and force the Porte to bow to the inevitable. Drovetti stated that, in this, Muhammad Ali was possessed of more good sense than Turks normally had. He then ordered Mengin to have a meeting with Muhammad Ali and try to find out what his plans were, but without compromising himself.

Drovetti was generally correct. Muhammad Ali did want the position of governor of Egypt and he wanted it by popular acclaim and the support of the native elite as a means of forcing the Porte to accept the unpalatable, but also because he knew that he had a hard time ahead of him and he needed the cooperation of the notables every step of the way. He had little reason to sow dissent and discontent for the Turks were doing it by themselves. He was simply benefiting from their mistakes.

The governor's ineptitude, his inability to bring order and security, his rampaging soldiers and continuous demands for funds had forced the city notables into drastic action. They delivered an ultimatum which they knew he would not accept and could not put into effect. The ultimatum demanded that he eject his soldiery from Cairo, forbid any new levies on the population, and re-establish communications with Upper Egypt, i.e. the mamluks. To quote Drovetti once again, 'The *qadi*, the ulama, the *ojakat*, the people at last united to depose Khurshid Pasha and proclaim the new pasha, Muhammad Ali, governor of Egypt. This revolution took place during the day of 22 Floreal [12 May 1805/13 Safar] without a single shot being fired.'²²

The Porte had played into Muhammad Ali's hand when they had

made him a pasha and named him governor of Jidda, for by so doing they had raised him to the rank of contender for the governorship of Egypt. While he may still have been acting out his power-play by the rules of the system, the population, on the other hand, were involved in a genuine revolution for a new form of government, even when they were being manipulated by the new pasha. There is little doubt that Muhammad Ali had manipulated the ulama into supporting him, and even into drawing up an ultimatum. There is equally little doubt that the ulama were willing to act once they could see an alternative to their situation. Throughout the eighteenth century the ulama of Cairo had led uprisings against the mamluks and against the French. They had emerged as the popular leaders of the country, and, if the high ulama were more likely to side with the voice of authority against the populace, the low ulama were equally ready to do the opposite. Leaders like Umar Makram, who had a populist base, had always gone to the masses for support. This specific incident, though apparently similar to many other uprisings against mamluk depredations, was dissimilar, or so it seemed to the populace. They were going to depose a governor and put a new one in his place. The elite, on the other hand, looked upon the incident differently. This is how Jabarti interpreted events.

Jabarti recorded that the ulama, after sending their ultimatum to Khurshid, were told that he was planning to assassinate them all for daring to send an ultimatum. They went to Muhammad Ali in desperation and said, 'We do not wish the rule of this man. He must be deposed.' Muhammad Ali asked, 'And whom do you desire as governor?' They answered, 'We will have none but you. You will become *wali* over us, and [abide] by our conditions, because of what we have seen of you of justice and goodness.' At first he demurred, then accepted the offer. Later in his chronicles Jabarti claimed that, while Umar Makram had been posing as Alfi Bey's friend, he was befriending Muhammad Ali, who flattered him and visited him secretly in the middle of the night. Jabarti implied that the two men were plotting together, that Muhammad Ali had falsely sworn to Makram that if he were named governor of Egypt he would rule with justice, would respect the law and see that it was obeyed, take no action without consulting the ulama, ('*wa la yafal amran illa bi-mashuratihi wa mashurati-l-ulama*')²³ and, were he to break his word, the ulama could depose him. This last term was sworn in public to the ulama. The rector of al-Azhar, Shaikh al-Sharqawi, clothed Muhammad Ali in a *qaftan* as an official act of investiture, and the news was broadcast all over the city and communicated to the *wali* entrenched in the citadel. The governor retorted, 'I was invested by the sultan. I will not be deposed by fallahin.' Simultane-

ously the ulama wrote to the Porte humbly requesting that Muhammad Ali be appointed *wali* of Egypt, according to the 'will of the people'.

The difference between that deposition of an unpopular governor and previous others was that it was the ulama and the people who had carried it out, not the mamluks or the soldiers. The ulama expected the new governor to rule in consultation with them, and to be deposed if he departed from their path. By that precondition they were setting themselves up as an authority that was superior to that of the government, as the moral guardians of the public weal, the wielders of the *sharia*. They were returning to early Islamic practice in theory, but in fact they were trying to limit the authority of a new ruler. That they couched their request to the Porte in the words 'the will of the people' was a clear indication that they would not bargain over terms, but meant what they said. *Vox populi* supported by *vox ulama* was *vox Dei*, and there was little the Ottomans could do about it.

The populace, expecting imminent confrontation with the deposed governor's soldiers, armed themselves. It was even said that the poor sold their clothing so as to buy weapons. Makram once again galvanized the artisans and organized them into fighting units. Most of Khurshid's men defected, leaving him isolated in the citadel with a small contingent of Albanians who opted to stand by him. His garrison was composed of around 500 soldiers and 800 non-combatants, and they had little or no supplies. Umar Makram ordered the population to lay siege to the citadel.

Mengin, the agent in Cairo, recounted the events with gusto. Unlike Jabarti who wrote his chronicles at a later period when his animosity towards Muhammad Ali had firmly established itself, Mengin wrote daily reports to his superiors. 'One sees reigning the same enthusiasm as in France during the first moments of the Revolution. Everybody is buying arms ... It is Shaikh Umar Makram who manages everything; he has more audacity and character and consequently more influence than the other shaikhs ... Muhammad Ali continues to make common cause with the people which is his main strength.'²⁴ Today we can visualize much more readily than past historians could how an alim could lead people to revolt, for popular movements are more clearly understood, and their potential more palpably felt. Where historians in the past could see only the Machiavellian manipulation of one man in all these events, Mengin more clearly saw that this was a genuine popular movement, carrying Muhammad Ali on its crest. Without that force behind him Muhammad Ali may not have achieved his goals. A week later Drovetti commented, 'the imposing situation in which the ulama find themselves obviously proves that at this moment they control the destiny of the government of Cairo'.²⁵

One of Khurshid's men met Makram and reasoned with him asking how he could morally justify laying siege to the citadel: 'How can you depose a man invested by the sultan?', he asked. 'Do not the Holy Scriptures say "Obey God, obey the Prophet, and those set in authority over you?"' Umar Makram answered, 'Those set in authority are the ulama, and those who uphold the *sharia* and the righteous sultan. This man [Khurshid] is a tyrannical man, and it is the tradition from time immemorial that citizens depose a *wali* if he be unjust.' 'How can you stop food and supplies from reaching him? ... are we heretics to be so treated?', asked the messenger. 'Yes', was the answer, 'the ulama and *qadi* have decreed that it is righteous to fight you. You are rebellious (*usah*).' 'The *qadi* is a heretic', replied the messenger angrily. 'If your *qadi* be a heretic', retorted Makram, 'what about the rest of you?', and they parted on that sour note.²⁶

While the population of Cairo manned the barricades, Muhammad Ali's soldiers demanded their wages, and would not fight until they had been paid, deserting their positions. The populace took their positions and fighting broke out between the citizenry and the soldiery. Chaos reigned; no one could distinguish friend from foe, wrote Jabarti. At times the people and the soldiers would fight each other and at other times they would join and fight those in the citadel, who egged the Ottomans and Albanians to fight the 'fallahin'. From time to time Khurshid would order a general bombardment of the city, with consequent panic. Mengin wrote,

the people raise barricades ... The women, the children, armed with stones stand on the roofs ... The number of armed men is said to reach 40,000, who all blindly obey the order of Shaikh Sayyid Umar, their general, who is regarded as head of the city ... everyone contributes, and the shaikh pays the artisan who has no resources other than his work, and who has been obliged by circumstances to remain under arms day and night.²⁷

Outside the capital the picture was just as grim. Upper Egypt was under mamluk control, while Alfi Bey and his men were roaming the Delta marauding. The Delhis, who had not joined any faction, continued to loot, pillage and rape in the Qaliub area, under the guise of giving chase to Alfi Bey. Drovetti was gloomy in his prognostication, but he believed Muhammad Ali to have character and to be friendly towards France, so he opined that the Albanian might yet master the situation and regulate Egypt's destiny.

On Friday 29 June 1805 word came that a courier from the Porte had disembarked. Ten days later he reached Cairo amid great rejoicings on the part of the multitude. The people lined the streets and received his

cortège with fifes, drums, gunfire, screams of delight that lasted for three hours. People came from all the quarters, men like Hajjaj al-Khudari, the head of the guild of greengrocers and the chief of the Habbala quarter of town, and Ibn Shama, the head of the guild of butchers, all of whom had manned the barricades, and were popular heroes. While the people were screaming for joy, Khurshid was raining cannon balls on the city, but these in no way deterred the celebrants. The cortège headed towards Muhammad Ali's house in Ezbekieh, where the official *firman* investing him as governor of Egypt was read out aloud to the audience. The Porte ratified the ulama's choice of governor as from 20 Rabi Awal/18 June 1805, and declared Khurshid relieved of his position.²⁸

In spite of the advent of the *firman*, fighting between soldiers and citizens continued all over the city. Khurshid refused to budge until he had seen the original *firman*. News that the mamluks had reached the outskirts of Cairo agitated the population. In the midst of this brouhaha the ulama, who feared the power of the masses even more than they feared the soldiers, held a meeting and decided that in view of the utter uselessness of their intervention in battles of any kind – to which activity they remained foreign – from henceforth they would eschew all political activity, preach peace, calm the inhabitants and exhort them to return to normal life. They themselves would reopen the Azhar and return to their teaching. They trooped to Muhammad Ali and announced that, as he had become master of the country, the citizens no longer had a political part to play and it was up to him to implement the sultan's orders.

This seemingly cowardly abdication of authority by the ulama into the hands of Muhammad Ali was not unexpected. The ulama were unused to wielding direct power, save on an interim basis, and were uncomfortable in the position of preaching potential sedition, especially if it were to result in their involvement in armed conflict. Many of the ulama had close ties with the mamluks and they did not wish to come into conflict with them, or at least not into armed conflict. A dispute with a decidedly military character they believed should be fought by the military, and the citizens should have no hand in it. No doubt behind the ulama's rejection of the active military role of the citizenry lay a basic fear of mass movements. The high ulama were men of wealth who feared and despised the masses even when they manipulated and used them. Jabarti refers to the common people in unflattering terms as rabble (*rua*), riff-raff (*al-ghawgha*), etc. The ulama hoped Muhammad Ali would become another Ali Bey who would protect their vested interests and wealth and check the rabble and other potential sources of

internal disorder. The ulama had built their wealth during periods of internal chaos by remaining apart from the fray. They were now not willing to jeopardize their material interests by permitting the rabble greater authority. As far as they were concerned, Muhammad Ali was there to bring law and order out of chaos, and to govern with the advice and consent of the men of property, and not with the support of the masses. They used the masses to cow the opposition, but they were not going to allow the masses any other role than that of rank and file at their command.

The high ulama were by and large the protectors of tradition, the guardians of the establishment and of the socio-economic order, which they justified, in normal times. They stepped out of character only in times of crisis, and in order to restore law and order. It is true that in the past some of the ulama had led uprisings against the mamluks and against the French, but these uprisings did not threaten the established system; on the contrary they were aimed at those who threatened to destroy it. In that incident with Muhammad Ali they were stepping out into the fray, a move that could threaten their lives and the entire system, especially if the masses were allowed to take an active role in directing the affairs of state. As far as the ulama were concerned, they now had a ruler, Muhammad Ali, who could settle any dispute arising between himself and his rivals or contenders for power. As for civil disputes, these could be handled by Umar Makram. The ulama had been manipulated or driven by events into accepting the blandishments of Makram and Muhammad Ali and supporting the latter against the *wali*, but they were not willing to go any further than that. They could pose as an *éminence grise* for a limited duration, but would not actively participate in events, and would not condone the active participation of the masses in such events. That reluctance to become involved in confrontation may have given Muhammad Ali his clue as to how to handle the ulama later. It was to teach him that they lacked staying power, that they preferred to hand over authority to some other group than themselves, in brief, that they were not dangerous as opponents.

The populace differed from the ulama. They had not been consulted by the ulama, who had reached their decision on their own, and they disapproved of the ulama's action. They had participated in what they believed was a popular revolt against the oppression of the military. They had fought the soldiers, they had beaten them, and brought to power a leader who, if he was not a popular leader, was at least the man approved by them. French consular reports confirm that when they report, "They say that Muhammad Ali adds to the suffrage of his troops the support of the inhabitants of Cairo and, what is extraordinary, the

esteem and confidence of the fallahin, or cultivators.²⁹ Having flexed their muscles against the hated Osmanli, the people were not pleased at the thought of giving up the battle at this juncture. 'We shall become a prey for the military in the day time, and the guards at night', they said. 'We will not surrender our arms nor obey such dictates.' These people were not fighting for ideals or for principles. They had organized a popular revolt to resist exploitation and ruin, encouraged to revolt by their natural leaders, the ulama, the men who in the past had urged them to revolt against the mamluks, which they had periodically done. When in the past the ulama had ordered them to lay down their arms, they had obeyed because there was no alternative, and no fear of reprisals. Now the ulama were telling them to lay down their arms when the political situation was still fluid, and when reprisals were lurking round the corner, for the Ottoman and Albanian soldiers were still roaming the streets at will. They were not willing to take the risk of having fought one battle to lose the next. The popular leaders protested the dictates of the ulama to Umar Makram, whom they looked upon as their leader. He disowned the decision reached by the ulama, and admitted that it ran counter to his own feelings. Both the masses and Umar Makram were overruled. The ulama speaking out of their own temerity refused to listen. It may well be that Muhammad Ali also had insisted that the people surrender their arms. The populace, discouraged by such opposition, laid down their arms and obeyed the ulama, even when they reviled and insulted them in public.

The fears of the people were fully justified, for the soldiers, finding them unarmed, abused them all over again. Not all the popular leaders laid down their arms. In Bulaq fighting broke out between the population and the Delhi troops, who tried to evict people from their houses and shops in order to stable their horses, and the military were defeated by the masses. Fighting continued in other parts of the city, and pockets of resistance to military depredations continued in spite of the injunctions of the ulama. In Rumaila, Hajjaj al-Khudari built a wall and a gate to keep out the soldiers.³⁰ All pockets of resistance were finally squashed by Muhammad Ali, who later on had two popular leaders, Hajjaj al-Khudari and Ibn Shama, hanged. These were the very men who had laid siege to the citadel and had helped his cause when it seemed in jeopardy, but the two leaders were dangerous men to the new governor because they were capable of rousing the masses and galvanizing resistance at a time when the establishment of law and order was of paramount importance.

The mamluks, camped just outside the city walls, girded themselves for action and tried to break into the city to reach Khurshid Pasha in the

citadel with whom they were in correspondence. On Sunday, 8 July, three rounds of cannon were fired from the citadel as a signal and the beys attacked the city. Unfortunately for the mamluks, their correspondence with the deposed governor had been intercepted and the Albanian troops were lying in wait for them and repelled them. Only then did the former *wali* agree to leave the country a week later, on condition that he and his men be paid their arrears. Umar Makram undertook to raise the funds, and Muhammad Ali, seeking his first loan from the Christians and the *tujjar*, established a tax on the inhabitants of the country and the major cities, (*al-bilad wa-l banadir*).³¹

The departure of the deposed *wali* was greeted with relief on the part of the citizenry although they had to pay a tax to get rid of him. Skirmishes between the citizens and the undisciplined soldiers continued in spite of edicts launched by the new governor that any soldier molesting citizens would be summarily executed. Outside the capital the situation was much worse, with marauding beys and Delhis troops extorting taxes, mostly imaginary, from the population. The Delhis, who had been brought to Egypt to help the governor establish order, instead sacked and looted the country, obeyed none but their own leaders and wreaked worse havoc than any of the other armed bands that roamed the countryside. The Delhis had sacked and pillaged the town of Sammanud in the Delta under the pretext of chasing mamluks. Next they attacked Mahalla al-Kubra, a town renowned as a textile centre, which they sacked and set on fire. In Damanhur they repeated their bloody acts and roamed over the provinces of Gharbiyya, Minufiyya, Sharqiyya and Daqahliyya sowing havoc and destruction. Once the Delhis had entered a town or a village, they left it in ruins. When they had gone, the bedouin followed in their footsteps and carted away whatever the Delhis had overlooked. Finally, the regular soldiers, supposedly in hot pursuit of the Delhis, would 'liberate' the village and surpass their predecessors in savagery. It was reported that they even divested the women of their clothing. By the time the Delhis had returned to Syria with their loot, which included kidnapped women and children and some 4,000 camels laden with booty, the Delta was a shambles.³²

Khurshid Pasha's departure from Cairo had encouraged the mamluk beys in the belief that they could win over the ulama and regain supremacy over Egypt. On Sunday 18 August, six beys and 400 mamluks infiltrated Cairo from the north and split into two groups, one going to Umar Makram's house, where he refused to meet them, and then on to Shaikh al-Sharqawi's house, where Makram met them. The beys asked the ulama for their support. The ulama refused and ordered

them to leave the city at once, which they prudently did. The second group of beys reached Bab Zuwaila to the south where they were met by gunfire from Maghribi troops. Disconcerted by the unfriendly reception, they sought refuge in a nearby mosque where they were captured and killed. Jabarti believed the incident to have been set up by Muhammad Ali as a trap for the beys, but adduced little evidence for his belief. That abortive attack made the beys head for Upper Egypt, except for Alfi Bey, always a loner, who headed for the province of Fayyum.

The old beys were by now dying out and their ranks were being filled by young sancak beys who were unknown, untried and had little authority with which to back their claims for supremacy in the land. The beys, though reduced in numbers, had, with Greek, Arab and Turkish mercenaries, enough fighting power to permit them to occupy Upper Egypt and harass the new governor for a few more years, especially when they controlled all grain shipments from Upper Egypt.

Money was always scarce in Egypt, particularly at that time, and new contributions were perforce levied by the new ruler on all those with funds: *tujjar*, Copts, other Christians. When these funds did not suffice, illegal means were tried. The pilgrimage caravan was seized and the merchants and officials of the caravan released only after they had paid substantial sums of money. In spite of these methods pay was constantly in arrears. Finally, Muhammad Ali called in the ulama and explained his situation to them. 'I have no means of finding money', he said. 'Help me and give me counsel.' He reassured them that once the soldiers were paid they would return home and evacuate Egypt. The ulama deliberated and finally opted to demand one third of the *faiz* from the *multazimun*. These last were outraged, fearing that it would set a precedent, but the pasha placated them and offered to sign a *firman* stating that this was a once only, extraordinary levy that was never to be repeated: 'May the curse of God fall on him who would repeat it.'³³ That promise was shortly to be broken.

Alfi Bey soon entered into negotiations with Muhammad Ali, who appeared willing to listen to his terms. Alfi demanded the areas of Fayyum, Bani Suif, Giza and Buhaira and the *iltizam* of 200 villages in return for submitting to Muhammad Ali, a totally unreasonable demand. The other beys set forth equally extravagant claims to all the territory south of Minia, and demanded that he reduce his army to 4,000 men and expel the rest from Egypt. Two expeditions were then set up, one against Alfi Bey and one against the mamluks in the south.

Yet at the time Muhammad Ali might have settled for reasonable terms with his enemies. He offered the mamluks the lands south of Girga and offered Alfi the province of Giza. Whether these were terms

or gambits to gain time is questionable. Alfi besieged the town of Damanhur, but the town had been supplied with arms and food by Umar Makram, and was able to repel the attack.

In the midst of these events word arrived that the Capitan Pasha with *nizam-i-jedid* troops, the newly formed Ottoman regiments, had arrived and that he had with him Musa Pasha, who allegedly was to replace Muhammad Ali as *wali* of Egypt. On receiving the news, Muhammad Ali at once stockpiled the citadel with arms, ammunition, wood for gun-carriages and wheels and prepared to resist his ouster by force if necessary. He called a meeting of his supporters and Makram read out the imperial *firman* which said that the emirs, having begged the sultan's pardon, were to be integrated in their old functions; the soldiers, who had ravaged and corrupted Egypt, to be expelled. The beys had promised to serve the empire and the Holy Cities and to remit cereals to them, to pay the tribute, and to pacify the land. The request of the beys to be returned to their former functions was to be granted by the Porte on condition the shaikhs and ulama stood guarantee for the good behaviour of the beys and the execution of these promises.

The French consul and the ministry in France were most alarmed at these developments, which were believed to be inspired by British intrigues in support of their protégés, the beys.³⁴ Drovetti ordered his agent to seek out Muhammad Ali, who bluntly informed the agent that he had won Egypt by the sword and would give it up only by the sword.³⁵ He said that he feared neither Alfi nor the Turks, whom he could easily bribe, but he feared British assistance to Alfi.

The ulama were not too happy at the idea of a return of the beys to power. In the first place they had become fairly wealthy in the absence of the latter by owning villages formerly under the domination of the beys. Were they to return to power the ulama would be dispossessed. Secondly, they feared the retaliation of the beys for supporting their opponent and helping to put him in power. For these reasons Umar Makram, himself a rich *multazim*, along with the other ulama, also *multazimun*, spent a busy two days with Muhammad Ali planning what answer to give to the Capitan Pasha's message. They drew up a document in which they respectfully declined to stand as guarantors for the beys. They had no power over the mamluks, they said, and described them as corrupt, tyrannical and rebellious men. They claimed that Muhammad Ali's taxes arose out of a genuine need to pay the numerous troops who were putting down the rebellious beys in conformity with the previous orders issued by the Porte.³⁶ In spite of the ulama's declining to accept his *firman*, the Capitan Pasha made it public and gave orders to supply Muhammad Ali with necessary ships to hasten his departure.

Muhammad Ali seemed too busy preparing for war to pay attention to the Capitan Pasha. He claimed that he was mounting an attack against Alfi Bey, which was partly true, but he was seen going back and forth between Bulaq and Old Cairo wrapped in a white burnouse like a Maghribi on some mysterious business that occupied him day and night. Whether these activities were attempts to bribe the Capitan Pasha or were part of some other ploy, they were successful. The Capitan Pasha, reversing his decision, decided that support of the beys was useless and opted to support Muhammad Ali instead. He advised him to write a new petition to the sultan, countersigned by the ulama and the heads of the *ojakat*, offering to pay a vast sum of money, and to send the petition to Istanbul with his eldest son Ibrahim, who would be a hostage until the money had been paid within a fixed period of time. This was done and Ibrahim was to stay in Istanbul for an entire year until the promised sum was finally paid off.

Three weeks later the Capitan Pasha read out a letter maintaining Muhammad Ali as *wali* of Egypt – for the ulama and the notables had attested to the satisfaction of the population with his government – on condition that he continue to abide by the traditional dues and customs of the land. A new condition was added, that the towns of Damietta, Rosetta and Alexandria, the three Mediterranean ports, be detached from the *wali*'s authority, and the customs revenues of the three port cities be remitted to the imperial treasury. Furthermore, the pasha was to make his peace with the beys and grant them territories. This last clause was not meant to be taken either literally or even seriously. The Capitan Pasha sailed away taking with him Musa Pasha and Ibrahim, the *wali*'s eldest son.

A few months later a *firman* arrived confirming the *wali* in his functions and bestowing upon him a pelisse and a sword. A second *firman* ordered him to send 6,000 ardabs of grain to feed the Ottoman army gathered in Syria in preparation for a campaign against the Wahhabis in Arabia. He was also ordered to stop harassing the beys, for the sultan had pardoned them. The *wali* paid not the slightest attention to these orders and continued his campaigns to bring the beys under his control.

In October of that year, 1806, Uthman Bey al-Bardissi died, and people attributed his death to a slow poison administered to him by Alfi Bey. Three months later Alfi was dead, after vomiting blood, presumably having contracted cholera. When Muhammad Ali heard of Alfi's death he allegedly gloated, 'At last Egypt is mine, the rest do not count' ('*tabat li misr wa ma udtu ahsibu li ghairihi hisaba*').³⁷

Alfi Bey was a legend in his own time. His soubriquet, al-Alfi, was

said to be the price of a thousand ardabs of wheat which Murad Bey had paid for him. A handsome, blond man, he was unruly, foul-tempered and energetic. He was also ruthless and capable of great cruelty but also of a certain rough-and-ready justice. He was the only bey who could put the fear of God into the bedouin and stop them from abusing the fallahin, while he despoiled and abused the bedouin himself. He was said to read widely in the occult sciences as well as in geometry, science and history, and had a large collection of books. His riches were so vast that he could lend money to slave traders, whose best customer he was with an army reputedly of 11,000 mamluks. Alfi was sufficiently farsighted to realize that once the Ottomans occupied Egypt in 1801 they would try to get rid of the beys and rule the country directly; he therefore effected the rapprochement with the British to foil the Ottomans. The rest of the beys did not believe Alfi and dissent grew between them. It was Alfi who had manipulated the Capitan Pasha's visit initially by promising the Porte 1,500 purses to oust Muhammad Ali. Bardissi, however, hated and feared Alfi, so they failed to present a united front to the Capitan Pasha and were out-maneuvred by Muhammad Ali, who promised to pay the same sum of money to the Porte and seemed to have a better control of the situation.

Just before he died, Alfi was supposed to have said, 'It is all over. Egypt belongs to Muhammad Ali because no one will dare to contest it.'³⁸ Muhammad Ali had once compared himself to Alfi saying that they were both walking a tightrope, save that Alfi wore clogs. Clogs or no, Alfi was a remarkable mamluk, the only one among them to have united the bedouin tribes behind his banner. He had married from among them and was said to understand them as well as if he had been raised among them, so they gave him their allegiance. On his death the bedouin tribes separated and could never unite again.

Had Alfi managed to defeat Muhammad Ali he might well have been able to rule Egypt in the old mamluk style once again. His men had, however, been given a more modern formation. They were organized along French battle lines, in square formation, and did not fight in the chaotic fashion of the other mamluks, a fact which had amazed the *wali* when he had first encountered it. It may have inspired him with a desire to emulate it, for Alfi had defeated his Albanians on various occasions, and had never been beaten by any other force.

The death of Alfi ruled out the only viable military obstacle to Muhammad Ali's centralized rule over Egypt. The other mamluk beys were no match for the Albanian. The last of the old mamluks, Ibrahim Bey, was worn out. Nonetheless, another five years of fighting and of mopping up mamluk strongholds were to continue before Egypt settled

down to a normal life. These four years continued to be critical for the *wali* for external reasons, but within Egypt itself the tide had turned in his favour and the mamluks were definitely on the run.

As for the local population, they were supportive of Muhammad Ali because he promised to restore normal life to the land, and the natural leaders of the people were behind him and inspired the population with confidence in the new governor. After all, they had no other alternative.

Up to then Muhammad Ali's problems were: (1) his opposition – the mamluks – and how to defuse it; (2) the Ottomans, and how to continue to win their acquiescence to his rule in Egypt; (3) finances and where to find the funds to pay his soldiers, without whom he could not hope to retain control of the territory, for he was still threatened by mamluks, by Ottomans and perhaps by a European power that might be inspired to seize an undefended Egypt. A new problem was to be added to the first three and which justified his reliance on a ready army, and that was a British invasion, followed by the active opposition of the British government. While his first three problems were eventually solved and he repelled the British invasion, his relationship with the Ottomans and British opposition were to cause his ultimate defeat; but that was to come several decades later.

The next five years were particularly trying for Egypt and for her new ruler. The history of the world is filled with stories of upstarts who found success as rulers of countries they had seized by the sword. Muhammad Ali could easily be compared with half-a-dozen adventurers who had reached the top of the ladder during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. What distinguished him from the others was the vision, political and economic, that he had for the country. Muhammad Ali was an illiterate, a highly unusual feature for a member of the Ottoman elite. He had in his favour cunning, native intelligence, a quick grasp of facts and the ability to think in broader terms than the immediate issue at hand. Once he set foot in Egypt his manoeuvres revealed a political awareness that was highly developed. The men with whom he allied himself were sometimes used by him as pawns, but pawns from whom he learned the inner workings of the country. From the Coptic scribes and the chief *tujjar* of the day he learned about the country's financial resources and its potential. From the ulama and Umar Makram he learned about the land and the indigenous population. From all these men he was able step by step to create an alliance that helped him to control the country. Chance was on his side, and allowed him to bet on those options that won, and if not chance, then his own good sense.

No man rules a country by himself, but he does rule with the help of

other men with similar vested interests. Such men in the past had been an alien oligarchy which had dominated the country, and had become assimilated by it. Muhammad Ali was to use an alien force to help him dominate the country, until he had won over the indigenous section of the land that represented a native elite, an elite with vested interests that matched his own, and who helped him dominate their fellow countrymen so that he could rule without the use of force, and could develop an orderly form of government and a bureaucracy. The new administration consisted of a nucleus of men, the *wali*'s family and retainers who formed an inner circle, and a large outer circle of Egyptians who were coopted to work for the government and enjoyed a share of the profits, a share they stood to lose were the government to be overthrown. That cooption of Egyptians started the process of Egyptianization of the government in the country.

Master in his own house

From the early days of his arrival in Egypt, Muhammad Ali had been struck by the potential riches of Egypt. A country that had been devastated by terrible plagues, by famine when people resorted to anthropophagy, by bad harvests, by seven years of warfare should by rights have been utterly destitute and devoid of all resources. The past disasters and the exploitation of two conquering armies notwithstanding, Egypt continued to provide grain, and to show flashes of potential affluence. Above all the country showed the signs of a continuous and cyclical revitalization with its usually lush harvests, its rich brown earth and its hard-working, uncomplaining peasantry. Trade and commerce were two things that Muhammad Ali understood well. Egypt had the potential for trade and sat astride a network of commercial routes that functioned in spite of all opposition to the orderly pursuit of commerce and all disruptions. Coming from the harsher soil of Kavala, where every square inch of land was lovingly tended and nurtured to eke out a living, the young officer was entranced by the soil of Egypt where everything grew in abundance and with ease. In his mind's eye the future ruler of Egypt had possibilities of a lush future for the country, a future based on agriculture and commerce.

Before he had a free hand in governing the country, the new *wali* first had to face a number of challenges, both within the country and without. These challenges and their consequences were to modify the structures of the local elites and consequently to modify the bureaucracy and give it a new direction. Finally, a change in Muhammad Ali's early allies was to take place. The first allies the *wali* acquired in Egypt as a young officer were men connected with trade and economy. Among these were al-Mahruqi, the scion of a wealthy trading family and the head of the guild of merchants; Ibrahim al-Muwailhi, another long-distance merchant with strong connections in the Hijaz; and the Coptic chief of finances, Muallim Girgis al-Gawhari, who knew the country's economy inside out. When squeezed by the Ottoman officials these men could still yield money after seven years of war and numerous forced

loans imposed on them by various governments. That one fact hinted at the amounts of money that could be made through commerce. Before Muhammad Ali could develop either trade or commerce, before he set about harvesting Egypt's actual or potential wealth, he needed to acquire control of the territory, and like his predecessor, Ali Bey al-Kabir, to destroy all foci of opposition. That aim led him into seeking a series of shifting alliances which eventually allowed him to attain a permanent and solid position of power.

That Muhammad Ali had been nominated *wali* of Egypt in 1805, though undoubtedly a great victory for an unknown and unsupported officer, was nevertheless a precarious victory. He had no money, and no army with any permanent bonds of loyalty towards him. For the time being he had the support of the native elites, both *ulama* and *tujjar*, who could raise money for him on an *ad hoc* basis, but for how long would they accept to do that before turning against him? The native elites could not make him a permanent ruler, and they could not fight for him against the mamluks and the Ottomans. The new *wali* faced a difficult political situation and a rough terrain that demanded all his considerable skills until 1811. Those years were touch and go, when any turn of the card might well have proved to be his last. At the same time, that period laid the groundwork for his vision of the future, and sketched out the alliances and alignments that ruled Egypt for the next four decades.

One factor that Muhammad Ali had not fully taken into consideration was Britain. The British government, which had supported and befriended Alfi Bey and the mamluks, was afraid of a second French invasion of Egypt. Quite wrongly as it turned out, it had assumed the mamluks would be an effective bulwark against that contingency. When it was proved wrong and when it became clear that the Ottomans were not going to turn Egypt back to the mamluks, a British force landed in Alexandria in March 1807. The British agent in Egypt, Colonel Missett, tried to get the Alfi mamluk faction to ally with the British forces and overthrow the *wali*. Muhammad Ali was in Upper Egypt battling the mamluks and had just defeated them in Asiut when he got word of the British landing. Caught between two fires, British and mamluk, the *wali* hurriedly sent messages to the mamluks with offers of peace and a promise to give them back the whole of Egypt on condition they help him rid Egypt of the British forces. Once this was done he promised they could all meet and determine the future government of the land. Alfi's faction turned down the British offer to join forces and said they would not use Christians to fight Muslims.¹ The other mamluks waited to see the outcome of the new conflict. Muhammad Ali hurried back to Cairo to find Umar Makram, in preparation for any possible British

invasion of Cairo, had already galvanized the population and had ordered all able-bodied men under arms, even the students of al-Azhar. He had also sent arms and supplies to the town of Rosetta. When the British forces advanced towards Rosetta the population was able to put up a tremendous resistance, utterly routed the British, and captured a number of officers.²

Muhammad Ali, seeing the military preparations undertaken by Umar Makram in Cairo, felt his nose put out of joint. Like the ulama he too feared popular movements that he could not control and remarked sourly that war was not the business of the populace but that of soldiers. The function of the people is to supply arms and funds, he told Makram, and asked him to raise a thousand purses to pay the troops who were preparing to lay siege to the city of Alexandria where the British forces were entrenched.

Muhammad Ali was aware of the inherent danger that lay in coming to blows with the British. He thus tried other means and sought negotiations with General Fraser for the evacuation of Alexandria. Since the British navy controlled the Mediterranean, it was the better part of valour to placate them as far as possible, and allow food to enter the city rather than try to starve the garrison which could have been revictualled by sea. At the time the British were fighting against Napoleon's forces in the Iberian Peninsula and desperately needed grain to feed their army. They had hoped to acquire that grain from the mamluks in Egypt, which explains their constant support of the mamluks. Once again Egypt was to become affected by external determinants – the Napoleonic wars. Muhammad Ali, knowing the British needed grain in Malta, offered to sell it to them. He also offered them trading facilities and security of communications with India, in return for which he sought promises of British assistance and a recognition of his independent position in Egypt.³ Missett had written to secretary of state Canning on 13 June 1807 with an account of events and assured him that he had succeeded in sowing in Muhammad Ali's mind suspicions towards the French and their intentions in Egypt. He was so convinced the *wali* was won over to his side that he asserted he 'never had again reason to complain of this partiality for the French nation'. This was stretching the truth on Missett's part, as later events were to show a continued partiality to the French. Missett went on to add, '– it is true he [Muhammad Ali] has long wished to become independent of the Porte; and were we to assist him powerfully in the attainment of that object of his ambition, he might, perhaps, be induced to break off all connection with France'. Missett, however, was not in favour of such support because he believed Muhammad Ali's main

strength to come from the Albanian forces, who were mercenaries liable to rouse revolts and render the land unstable. He believed it was necessary 'that both Muhamed Ali and the Albanians should be compelled to evacuate this country and that the Mameluk government should be re-established'. The beys in gratitude would presumably offer the British government all the advantages it sought. Missett ended his report by saying, 'shall the world be permitted to entertain an opinion of the superiority of Turkish over British troops?'⁴ Such arrogance after a military defeat was uncalled for.

Muhammad Ali's terms were turned down by the British authorities, but in September Alexandria was evacuated by the British forces. No arrangements were made with the *wali*, except for an offer to buy his grain, which offer he took up in 1808.

That incident set the groundwork for future trends. To begin with it bred in Muhammad Ali a permanent suspicion of British intentions towards Egypt. It also instilled in him the realization that through its naval strength Britain could become an invaluable ally, an ally he wooed unsuccessfully for the rest of his days. Concomitantly, the incident reinforced his belief in the importance of a navy for any independent state such as he hoped to set up, a navy that would be strong enough to defend the coastal cities and to defy any naval embargo imposed by enemy forces, and this led to his early creation of an Egyptian navy and merchant marine. The mamluks before him had also come to the same conclusions and had hired Greek ship-builders and cannon founders to that end. Lastly, it revealed the means whereby a profitable financial venture could be entertained, notably the sale of grain to the British forces in Malta and the Iberian Peninsula.

The British occupation, which had lasted a mere six months, made patent to the *wali* the weakness of his position within Egypt. With the mamluks at his rear he had been caught in a pincer movement that had forced him to promise the mamluks anything – with the firm intention of reneging on his promise once the danger was over. The precariousness of his situation was apparent more than ever, and the need to rid himself of internal danger loomed large.

The mamluks were not the sole threat he had to face within Egypt. Muhammad Ali's men constituted an equally hazardous party. In mid-October, just after the British evacuation of Alexandria, a group of Ottoman and Albanian soldiers took pot-shots at the *wali*. A few days later they surrounded his house clamouring for their back pay. Muhammad Ali managed to escape from his house late at night and sought refuge in the citadel. The soldiers, frustrated by his absence, pillaged his house. Drovetti, who recounted the incident, claimed that had it not

been for the fact that Makram had armed the populace and that a few of Muhammad Ali's officers had stood neutral, the affair would have met with a sorry ending.

As usual the pasha managed to turn the tables on the insurgents. The next morning they all met in a public diwan, and he cleverly put the blame for the dearth of funds on the officers. He claimed having given the officers vast sums of money to transmit to their men, and demanded a precise accounting before he would disburse further funds. He added that he had allowed the army in the past to despoil the inhabitants to satisfy the avarice of a few individuals, but that this would cease from now on. Military reforms would be instituted, or they could find themselves another military leader, he threatened. He ended by demanding that the rebel leaders be expelled, and said he would pay only three months' salary for the whole year, but sweetened the pill by promising a bonus once he became master of Upper Egypt.⁵

These words took the wind out of the sails of both officers and men and forced them to agree to the *wali*'s terms and even to restore the objects pillaged from his house. The event was to force Muhammad Ali to find an alternative fighting force to the Albanians, one that was more disciplined and more amenable to authority.

The recent actions of Umar Makram in arming the Cairenes both against the British and against the Albanians highlighted the capabilities of the man. He had saved the *wali*'s skin on a number of occasions, but he could, in consequence, become a dangerous element in society because of his very resourcefulness, his effectiveness and because of his populist links should he choose to cross swords with the *wali*.

While these events were unrolling in Egypt, dramatic events were taking place in Istanbul in May. Sultan Selim III was deposed by a coup d'état and replaced by his cousin Mustafa through a revolt of the janissaries over the *nizam-i-jedid*. Mustafa was not to last long as a sultan, and having caused Selim's death he was in turn assassinated and succeeded by Sultan Mahmud. By the time Mahmud had built up his power base, a decade had passed and Muhammad Ali had had the necessary respite from Ottoman pressure that he needed to become master of Egypt, and of an empire as well. With the fall of Selim and the turmoil in the Ottoman government one element in the opposition to his presence in Egypt had been defused. Rather than try to remove Muhammad Ali from his post, the Ottomans contented themselves with trying to get him to send his army to the Hijaz to fight the Wahhabis. The Wahhabis, a fundamentalist sect, had overrun the Holy Cities in the Hijaz, kept out the pilgrimage caravan and threatened the prestige of the sultan as guardian of the Holy Cities. In 1807 Muhammad Ali

justified his inability to respond by pleading that Egypt had had a low Nile, that the lands were unwatered (*sharaqi*) and the crop poor. He had debts left over from the previous *wali*, new ones incurred by the British adventure and no funds to mount a campaign. Upper Egypt was devastated by the mamluks and he had no grain for his forces. For all these reasons, he reckoned, he was in the throes of an acute financial crisis and could not send an army abroad. Moreover, he said, as the Ottomans were at war with the Powers, were he to send his army outside Egypt, then one of the Powers might seize Egypt all over again.⁶ The memory of a British landing was too recent for him, as he hoped the French occupation was recent in the memory of the Ottomans. That letter may have bought him time for that year, but the order to attack the Hijaz was reiterated every year until his forces finally did go, in his own time.

Muhammad Ali knew that, with the weakness of the Ottoman government and its preoccupation with the succession, it would not try to depose him yet, and that he did not have much to fear in that direction for the moment. To the contrary the new sultan needed Muhammad Ali's support if not neutrality, and he and his mother, Asma Sultan, were most conciliatory. In 1807 Asma Sultan sent a letter to Muhammad Ali in answer to one he had sent her begging her to use her influence to retain him as governor of Egypt, a letter that was accompanied by a large *douceur*. In her answer she wrote that her son, the sultan, would retain Muhammad Ali because he was 'his man' and she quoted her son as saying that Muhammad Ali was 'especially dear (*Aziz*) to me'. She added that she would continue to look after Muhammad Ali's interests and to maintain him in his position as *wali* of Egypt, 'for life (*Mada-l hayat*), as was his desire'.⁷ From later correspondence, we learn that the *wali* had sent her presents, looked after her *iltizam* in Crete, and generally rewarded her good will towards him with monetary advantages, so that a firm bond was forged between her and him.

The year 1808-9 was marked by occasional expeditions against the mamluks in Upper Egypt. By then many of the mamluks had joined up with Muhammad Ali and grain was coming in from the southern provinces. This allowed the pasha to take further steps in his plan to gain ultimate control of the financial resources of the state. Financial difficulties continued to plague his administration and he needed the control of such funds to run his administration smoothly. His actions therefore were motivated by sheer necessity and polity. He had to find funds to pay his army and was forced to get them at the source, to eliminate the position of dependence on the native elite in which he constantly found himself.

Both Muhammad Ali and his allies among the ulama and the *tujjar* were losing money because of the insecurity of trade routes. The Red Sea trade in the hands of the Wahhabis had been closed off to them, which presented a good reason for eventually acquiescing to the sultan's request to mount a campaign in the Hijaz. Upper Egypt, the link to the Sudan market and the overland route to the Red Sea, was, for the moment, still in mamluk hands, making it necessary to mount a campaign to put down the mamluks and regain the area and so re-establish the trade route. The *tujjar* were keen on that campaign, not only because of the trade route, but because they needed the market of Upper Egypt for their commodities. Other than the obvious political motive of dominating the entire country that moved Muhammad Ali, there was the added motive of land revenues. The central administration in the past had made much of its money out of land revenue. These revenues had been lost as far as the Said was concerned, in part because of mamluk control of the area, but in part because the *multazimun* had been unable to extract any surplus from the fallahin, who, using the precarious conditions of the times as the excuse, would neither pay fees nor taxes for as long as they could, claiming they were despoiled by the mamluk beys. The *multazimun*, whether ulama or *tujjar*, were keen on the move into the Said which allowed them to re-establish their authority over their lands. The interests of the new ruler and of his native supporters coincided in putting down the mamluks in Upper Egypt and bringing the region once more under the control of the central authority.

Land revenue in general was unsatisfactory, for large portions of revenue had become lost to the state through one device or another. The increase in *waqf* lands had alienated one fifth of the arable land from the purview of the tax collector, while the *iltizam* system in general diverted the surplus from the land into the pockets of the various intermediaries rather than into the pocket of either administration or even *multazim*. In brief, the land tenure system needed an overhaul, one that would either allow the *multazim* the possibility of obtaining more surplus from the fallah – which is what the *multazimun* hoped for and expected to obtain from their new leader – or which would allow the central authority to divert more of the surplus into their own coffers, displacing the *multazim* by a more efficient tax-collecting agency, and by expanding the land acreage with a series of public works. None of these steps were new to Egypt. They were the traditional and normal ways of increasing the revenues of any strong central government. Before such steps could be effected, Muhammad Ali was to come into conflict with his erstwhile supporters, the ulama and the *multazimun*, who saw the danger to their

own vested interests in his actions and who tried unsuccessfully to block his moves. By then the alliance of elites was heavily weighted in terms of a *tujjar*-elite alliance and the *multazimun*-cum-ulama were gradually being squeezed out of the alliance, unless they accepted the redivision of land resources. Some ulama accepted their secondary role, while others like Makram sought to block it and in so doing lost more than their land.

By that time, 1809, the sale of raw materials for export was once more taking place. Men like Boghos, later to become minister for Foreign Affairs, who had been a customs official in past days and who had traded in grain, could not help in his capacity as chief translator but have explained to Muhammad Ali the advantages of exporting raw materials and expanding that trade. Not only England needed grain in Malta, but the southern Mediterranean in general was a market for Egyptian materials. The first grain sale of 1808 merely confirmed the importance of such an export item. To control the trade in raw materials and expand it necessitated a reworking of the land-tenure system, one which would allow a greater control over the produce of the land on the part of the central government. It would seem as though the early alliance of native elites – ulama, *tujjar*, *multazimun*, bureaucrats – was showing signs of stress with different interests pulling in different directions. Muhammad Ali had the final say in what direction to take, for he spoke with the voice of the army at his command. As a mercantilist his interest coincided with those of the *tujjar* – which meant the decline in power of the *multazimun*/ulama. In the first place, the ulama had revealed their basic weakness early on and he knew that they could be cowed easily. At the same time he knew the potential in trade along the entire Mediterranean basin as well as along the traditional trade routes, so he strengthened his alliance with the *tujjar* at the expense of his other allies. A showdown was soon to take place and the lines of conflicting interests were drawn. That showdown demonstrated to the ulama their weakness in face of central authority, especially a central authority that was united and cohesive.

In Jamad Awal/June 1809 Muhammad Ali ordered that *waqf* lands, which in the past had been exempted from taxation, now be taxed along with *usya* lands. That order was to bring the *wali* and his main native supporter, Umar Makram, representing the faction of ulama/*multazimun*, into conflict – a conflict from which the *wali* emerged victorious. The ulama, many of whom controlled *waqf* lands, were understandably disturbed by that order and, led by Umar Makram, they met together to take action. The diwan effendi was sent by the pasha to consult with them and he suggested that the ulama go and talk to the pasha, but added a veiled threat, the first of its kind. He said they should be careful

in their conversation with the pasha, for 'he is a presumptuous young man, ignorant and tyrannical and might cause you harm'. The ulama understood the implied threat and answered, 'We will never go and meet with him so long as he commits such acts. When he ceases to impose taxes and avania we will go to him as we have done in the past, for he has sworn to be just, not unjust.'⁸

The ulama vowed to stay at home and hold no lessons at the university until they had received satisfaction from the pasha. Such tactics had worked with the mamluks, but they did not seem to be working with the pasha, who knew the time had come to get rid of the native elite, who stood between him and his sources of income and could threaten his security. He therefore intrigued with two shaikhs, Shaikh al-Mahdi and Shaikh al-Dawakhli, who were won over to his side by promises of largesse and were opponents of Makram. After waiting for five days to no avail, Makram and the ulama met with these two shaikhs who informed them that Makram's accusations were unfounded and that the pasha had denied that any taxes were to be levied. Makram indignantly said that he had in his possession the letters which ordered the taxes levied.

The two arch-intriguers managed to woo another powerful shaikh to their rank, Shaikh al-Sharqawi, the rector of al-Azhar. Shaikh al-Sharqawi bore a grudge against Makram, who had previously intrigued against him, and joined forces with the two ulama who further managed to bring Shaikh al-Sadat over to their side. They trumped up charges against Makram, who was accused of having intrigued against Shaikh al-Sadat and Shaikh al-Mahdi and of having falsely entered names of Copts in the register of the *ashraf*, the register which bears the names of those descended from the prophet's lineage. Makram, who had made a lot of enemies from among the ulama by his activism and his close friendship with Muhammad Ali, found that no alim would stand by him.

Makram was something of a dark horse. Although he claimed to be a notable (*sharif*) his known lineage went back only two generations and could never be traced further, let alone to the Prophet. He had never been a *bona fide* member of the ulama group and had been appointed *naqib al-ashraf* as a political reward by the mamluks. However, he had always been a popular leader and a populist himself, in spite of his great wealth. He had manipulated, roused and dominated the masses on a number of occasions, and relied on, rather than feared, the power of the masses which strengthened his own authority vis-a-vis the other power blocs in the land. The masses recognized in him some element to which they responded; they may have instinctively realized that he would

support their interests, unlike the other high ulama who were more likely to bend to pressures. That populist trait in Makram, among his other characteristics, was the one which the high ulama distrusted and feared. Makram was a man whose talents shone in time of crisis, when he could galvanize the masses. At other times he was feared precisely for that very ability which threatened the *status quo* and its accompanying vested interests. For, while a member of the wealthy group, a *multazim* and a *tajir* in his own right, he was not obviously part of the long-distance *tujjar* cabal, but represented the landowning, local-industries groups. At the same time, Muhammad Ali had come to see Makram as a potential rival for authority in the country, the only man with courage to challenge him and with mass support.

With Makram defused, the rest of the ulama became pliant and subservient. Most of them were too scared to oppose the *wali*, and those who were not scared had been won by the blandishments of the Mahdi cabal. Makram was ousted from his position as marshal of the notables, and exiled to Damietta, while Shaikh al-Sadat was named *naqib al-ashraf* in his place. Jabarti, who recounted these events, commented that Sayyid Umar Makram only got what he deserved, 'for God always punishes those who give their support to a tyrant, and He is never unjust to any of His creatures.' This bitter remark reflected al-Jabarti's animosity towards the *wali* for Jabarti was a wealthy landowner himself, but it also reflected his awareness of the political situation and that the downfall of Umar Makram spelt the downfall of the ulama generally and the end of their influence over Muhammad Ali. He knew that the ulama had intrigued against Makram to get rid of him because they 'hated and were jealous of him [Makram], and he was to them and to the inhabitants of the town a bulwark and a defence. The proof is that after his departure their [the ulama's] influence continued to diminish.'⁹

That power struggle left a weakened group of ulama who had lost their only real leader, and who were now at the mercy of the *wali*. For a long time to come the populace continued to believe the ulama were powerful and appealed to them to redress any wrongs but, as Jabarti sadly remarked, 'they [the people] did not know that they [the ulama] had given in to the master who dominated them'.¹⁰

With the exile of Umar Makram, the last vestige of local opposition to Muhammad Ali, other than that of the mamluks, disappeared and the ulama became too cowed or too sold out to attempt any further action. That is not to assume that their influence died out completely, but their force as a major source of opposition within the country waned for the time being. They had had a brief golden age, which could have spelt the beginning of a new era of government, in consultation with the ulama,

(*bi mashurat al-ulama*), but they failed to rise to the occasion. Muhammad Ali had outwitted and outmanoeuvred them from the very beginning. He had made use of them, and when their usefulness came to an end and seemed likely to threaten him, he promptly defused them. He and his Albanians, in alliance with the leading *tujjar* in the country, were now in the seats of power. Having rid himself of the ulama as an obstacle to raising taxes and controlling the wealth of the state, the way to more radical internal changes in land tenure and administration, and in trade lay wide open. Externally he planned equally radical changes for, according to the British agent in Alexandria, the *wali* intended to conquer Jidda, Yanbu (as ordered by the sultan) and Yemen and attack the mamluks in Upper Egypt. The agent further surmised that the *wali* 'flattered himself that his Britannic Majesty will furnish him with the means for putting his projects in execution ... Muhammad Ali courts an alliance with Britain in order to procure to his shipping an uninterrupted passage at sea as well as the deliverance of his ports from blockage.'¹¹

Talks of peace between Muhammad Ali and the mamluks made the latter decide to meet him in Cairo in 1810, when they camped at Giza and met his messenger. By then many of the mamluk beys had defected to the *wali*'s side, won by promises of wealth and support. Mamluk leadership had waned and weakened, and they tired of constant warfare. Many of their bedouin allies had been bought off with promises of land and autonomy. Shahin Bey, Alfi's successor, had long since gone to the *wali*'s camp, although the mamluks tried to woo him back. Because the mamluks and the *wali* distrusted each other, negotiations between them came to nought. Ibrahim Bey refused to believe anything the *wali* said and assured his men that the pasha would continue to be as treacherous and perfidious as he had been in the past, and gave them his version of the rise to power of the pasha.

He first betrayed his master Muhammad Pasha Khusrev ... Having plotted against him and taken the citadel with the aid of his brother, Tahir Pasha ... he incited the Turks against Tahir Pasha and had him assassinated by them in his house. After that he made himself our friend, promised us his assistance ... joined Uthman Bey al-Bardissi, to whom he swore friendship and fraternity, and egged him on against Ali Pasha al-Tarabulsi. The result was the murder that everyone knows and which was attributed to us. He plotted to have al-Alfi betrayed by his brother al-Bardissi; he sent us back the soldiers who requested their pay and advised Uthman Bey to ask the people for the taxes. These manoeuvres caused us to leave Cairo in the most abject state possible. He brought Ahmad Pasha Khurshid and named him vizier and undertook an expedition against us. Then he returned to Cairo, roused the soldiers against

him [Khurshid] and told Sayyid Umar Makram and the ulama that the pasha planned to have them assassinated. The latter incited the populace and we know the wars that followed. Sayyid Umar Makram served him zealously ... but once he attained his goal he exiled Sayyid Umar ... He did the same with Uthman Bey and the others. Who can trust such a man and make peace with him? ... the taxes of Egypt in the past were enough to support ten thousand mamluks. Today Muhammad Ali makes more money out of one tax than the entire province yielded and yet he cannot even give us enough funds to live on with our families and retainers ... He wishes to lay a trap and sacrifice the last one amongst us.¹²

That grim and biased analysis of Muhammad Ali's career missed the basic motive force behind the *wali's* plots; the need for a centralized authority. It was not that he begrudged the mamluks funds to live on, he begrudged them their potential authority in the land. Unless they accepted his paramount authority, he would seek to exterminate them. The mamluks, though greatly weakened, were still capable of mischief, if only by wreaking havoc with the crops of the Said, and the *wali* wanted them neutralized if not eliminated. Further warfare broke out between both parties in the Fayyum and in Upper Egypt. By July Drovetti could write to his minister, 'He has made himself master of all the land until Bani Suif, including Isna.'¹³ The pasha announced his victory over the mamluks in Upper Egypt by claiming to have killed 700 of them.¹⁴

The effects of these constant battles were devastating to the population. 'This internal war ruins agriculture and commerce. The villages are destroyed, the peasants escaping from all areas. In Cairo nothing is bought or sold. Money is tight, and the debtors avoid all payment.'¹⁵ Others reported that one third of the land had been abandoned and all industry had disappeared.¹⁶ There may have been an element of exaggeration in these reports since their authors never went out to the countryside to view the desolation and were only repeating hearsay accounts. We can, however, take it for granted that no land is left untouched after an army has gone through it and when battle after battle has been fought over it. Small though these battles may have been in terms of numbers of combatants, their destructive power was nevertheless considerable. One positive aspect of Muhammad Ali's victories over the mamluks was that he found a vast amount of grain stored in Upper Egypt, which he put to good use as an export item that was to yield him his first substantial profit in trade.

These were decisive battles for Muhammad Ali, and from then on the mamluks were on the run. They tried to get him to grant them territories or income of their own while they resided in the Said, but he

persisted in forcing them to reside in Cairo where he could keep an eye on them. Some mamluks did return to Cairo, and took up service with him, others like Ibrahim Bey exiled themselves to Nubia and the Sudan, and were no longer a threat to anyone, unless it be to the hapless inhabitants of the areas. The final *coup de grâce* came in March 1811 when the mamluks were massacred in the citadel.

That event was out of character for Muhammad Ali for, perfidious and treacherous though he could be, he had never resorted to massacres, other than on the battlefield. It was rumoured that the beys who had joined his ranks were secretly plotting with those in the Said and that suspicious letters had been intercepted which showed plots with Sulaiman Pasha, the *wali* in Syria. Whether true or not, the pasha's aim was to rid himself of any potential source of opposition and the mamluks in Cairo who were not wholly won to his side would always be that. The occasion for trapping the mamluks was the ceremony of investiture for his son Tussun Pasha, who was to lead the army sent to fight the Wahhabis in the Hijaz. The ceremony took place in the citadel and all the grandees had been invited to attend. Of these 24 beys and 40 *kushaf* showed up. When the ceremony was over, they were trapped in a passageway on their way out of the citadel and killed to a man. The incident, which was nothing more than a mopping-up action, has been exaggerated beyond all recognition by so-called eye-witness accounts of people who were nowhere near the scene of the crime. Drovetti claimed the death of 500 mamluks, including 25 beys and 60 *kushaf* and added, 'Alfi's house has been almost entirely destroyed.'¹⁷ Muhammad Ali's account to the sultan listed 24 beys ('yirmi dort nafara umara-i malanat') and 40 men ('kirk fardi'),¹⁸ the ears and heads of whom he sent the sultan.

While the incident shocked Drovetti and no doubt any number of other people, it merited the *wali* a letter of congratulations from his overlord in Istanbul, who commended him on his action and was to take a page out of his vassal's book and finish off the janissaries some fifteen years later. From then on Muhammad Ali was sole ruler in Egypt and any opposition to his plans was to come from within his own entourage, or from the Porte, who tried one last overt attempt to overthrow him.

When the Egyptian army had conquered the Hijaz, the *wali* had sent his son Ismail, accompanied by the 'keeper of the keys' (*anahtar agasi*), a certain Latif, to the Porte with the keys of the Holy Cities. There Latif may have been induced to carry out a coup against his master, with the promise that he would succeed him. On his return to Egypt Latif allegedly tried to overthrow the *wali*. Muhammad Ali was then in the Hijaz and during his absence, so the story goes, Latif tried to spread the

news of the *wali*'s death. The Kikhya Bey discovered the plot and sent troops to Latif's house, but the man escaped capture. Meanwhile, other dissident elements among the population appear to have joined that revolt, among them a former popular leader Hajjaj al-Khudari. Latif was captured and beheaded and Hajjaj was hanged.¹⁹ Whether the incident was a trumped up one to get rid of Latif or a genuine attempt at overthrowing the pasha is unknown, but the Ottomans were the obvious suspects.

From then on resistance was local, when a number of rebellions broke out for a variety of reasons which had nothing to do with the Porte but were purely internal. In 1815 there were rumours of an army being sent against the pasha because he had refused the post of grand vizier,²⁰ but these were just rumours. That year the *wali* introduced the European mode of exercise among his troops, which occasioned discontent. Some of the troops attacked his house in Ezbekiyya, but the *wali* had got wind of the action and had prudently and secretly gone to the citadel. For two days the troops went on a rampage until they were quelled. The insubordination of his Albanian troops was an added cause for changing the formation of the army and turning it into a more disciplined fighting body – an action that was to have profound effects on the Egyptian population.

Within Egypt a radical change in power elites had taken place by 1811. The previous pattern of an alliance between mamluks, ulama and *tujjar* to contain the *wali*, who was changed yearly, and to exploit the resources of the country to their advantage was now destroyed. In its place arose an alliance between the *wali* and his officers and bureaucrats, a select group of *tujjar* and a smaller and more select group of ulama. The previous fluid system of manipulations and shifting alliances between evenly matched forces like those of Murad Bey, Ibrahim Bey, Alfi Bey and their ulama allies for *ad hoc* purposes, such as taxation or trading in some commodity, was becoming institutionalized into a government hierarchy as the sole repository of power from whom emanated all rewards. Alliances and alignments were created within the government structure and not without it as had been the practice in the past.

Throughout these years of turmoil, beginning with the French occupation of Egypt, while the elite ruling the country had changed a number of times, from mamluk to French to Ottoman/Albanian/mamluk to Muhammad Ali, the lesser echelons of the administration had continued to function in some semi-permanent capacity. Taxes were still imposed and collected, albeit haphazardly, and officials had survived. The image of utter and complete chaos that one is tempted to see

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was only a partial one that operated on the higher planes of the bureaucracy. That bureaucracy for the next decades was to be overhauled and reformed a number of times until a method of government operated that was different from anything that had come before it. Yet the link with the past was always preserved, for the *wali* used mamluks to rule Egypt, and his household became the only mamluk household in the country. In that sense he was the last of the mamluks and the first of the new rulers at one and the same time. He was a link between the eighteenth century and the later nineteenth century, for he continued and expanded the trends of the eighteenth century and modified them into those of the nineteenth century. He innovated, there is no doubt about that, but he also continued existent trends until they lost their usefulness and could be thrown aside to make way for more lucrative or more interesting trends. In the same way he had used the ulama to gain his ends, a lesson taught to him by the mamluks, and was to use the *tujjar* and set them aside when he had learnt the ropes from them.

There was still a long period of struggle ahead of him, but the essential steps to establish his own form of government had been taken, the die was cast, and Muhammad Ali free to put his plans into action. What these plans were we shall soon see.

Egypt was now in the hands of an Albanian adventurer who controlled it and who was to expand its frontiers to include the Hijaz, and to expand them further until Egypt became the centre of a vast empire. How Muhammad Ali was able to do that and with whose assistance is the subject of the next chapters.

Family, friends and relations

From the image of Muhammad Ali that we have presented it should by now be clear that the *wali* was a man who planned his moves after a great deal of thought. To assume that he acted capriciously or under the inspiration of a third party is to misjudge his character completely. He consulted his advisers, the few he respected and the many he despised, but he believed in action after mature reflection. In his letters to his sons that trait comes through very clearly, especially in his letters to his son Ismail who was rash and impetuous. He wrote to him, 'the position of a commander-in-chief – (*ser asker*) – is not attained through heroism (*butula*), which we call courage (*basala*), but through good planning (*husn al tadbir*), and through constant inquiry and consultation with your officers on all matters. Therefore ask, question so that you can learn everything that will lead to victory.'¹ In another letter he admonishes him to seek 'advice from your subordinates from the highest to the lowest ranks'.

Muhammad Ali believed in the value of specialists. He searched them out, learned from them and made use of that knowledge. He tried to teach his sons the virtue of the expert, and every son who was sent out on a military expedition was given two tried and experienced men and enjoined to take no steps that these two had not approved. That way he hoped his sons would learn the art of war from those who were adept and experienced at it, until the time came when the young princes had learnt the trade and needed no mentors. He himself had gone through the school of hard knocks and wished to spare his sons, and himself, the consequences of mistakes that could cost him the throne, or the life of one of his sons. Ismail did not heed his father's advice and died in consequence. Ibrahim did, and lived to become an eminent strategist and a great general.

During his first decade in Egypt Muhammad Ali learnt from the mamluks, the ulama and the *tujjar*. Few of these early associates remained close to him or lasted longer than their usefulness to the state except for a handful of men among his Albanian relatives and friends,

and one man who became his *alter ego*. That man was Boghos Bey the Armenian, who served the pasha loyally and faithfully to the end of his days. As Muhammad Ali's interpreter, advisor and general factotum in matters of trade and commerce as well as foreign relations, Boghos played a powerful rôle in shaping Egyptian trade and rose to become minister of foreign affairs. The links between the two men were so close that when Boghos died the *wali* mourned him as he would a dear relative. Boghos was described as an intelligent, amiable man who died poor and incorruptible. He was extremely polite, showed sagacity in judging human character and possessed a great deal of information on the European markets and political events.² Many thought Boghos had amassed a great fortune in the service of his master, but he never did, for the accumulation of wealth did not interest him, which may explain why such an astute man never succeeded as a merchant on his own account. Nubar in his memoirs recounts that when Boghos died and they entered his house they discovered a few gold pieces in the treasure box and little else. Boghos had been given several *cartes blanches* by the *wali* and could draw on the treasury for any sum whenever he needed funds for himself. He was never paid a regular salary but the *wali* trusted him to do as he pleased in terms of payment. For a man as suspicious as Muhammad Ali was, this was signal proof of trust and a unique favour allowed to no one else. Towards the end of Boghos' life, when Abbas was appointed *kathoda* (or *kikhya*) of Egypt he fixed a salary for Boghos, who was so offended by this act that he allegedly wasted away, would not eat and died in January 1844. When news of Boghos' death reached Muhammad Ali and he was told that Boghos had been buried simply and quietly without the honours due him, the *wali* was furious and sent a letter to Osman Pasha, the governor of the city, which began 'Donkey, brute' and went on to rain threats and insults on the man's head for having failed to give Boghos his due with a state funeral. He ordered him to exhume the coffin and have it buried again with full military honours, which was promptly done.

Boghos brought a number of Armenians into the Egyptian administration who served as translators, interpreters and high officials in the bureaucracy. The line of loyal and efficient Armenian servants of the state continued until the end of the nineteenth century when the bureaucracy became fully Egyptianized. None, however, occupied as powerful a position with the ruler as Boghos had done, for Boghos never betrayed the trust that the *wali* placed in him.

One other man whom the *wali* trusted in matters of trade and commerce was Muhammad al-Mahruqi, who had probably taught the *wali* the ropes when he first came to Egypt. Al-Mahruqi was the son of a

famous merchant who had made a fortune in trade in the Red Sea, and who, as the richest merchant, became head of the guild of merchants, the *shahbandar al-tujjar*. Muhammad had taken over that position on his father's death, and from the outset become Muhammad Ali's banker, advisor and chief merchant. It is not too fanciful to believe that al-Mahruqi, who was anxious to reopen the lines of trade with the Hijaz, was the one who inspired the *wali* with enthusiasm for that expedition. Al-Mahruqi accompanied Tussun to the Hijaz and the prince was ordered to do nothing without consulting the merchant who was to be privy to all matters ('*bi mashuratih wa itilaih, wa la yunafidhu amran min al-umuri illa bad murajaatih*').³ Throughout the early decade of Muhammad Ali's rule the name of al-Mahruqi crops up regularly in Jabarti's chronicles, as did that of Umar Makram. As *shahbandar*, al-Mahruqi controlled all the merchants and artisans, had authority over their quarrels and regulations, in fact had absolute authority over them ('*lahu-l hukm ala jamii-l tujjar wa ahl al-hiraf wa-l mustasabihin fi qadayahim wa qawaninihim wa lahu-l amr wa-l nahy fihim*'). With the Hijaz campaign, al-Mahruqi was appointed to supervise the bedouin caravans, the loading of ships and their unloading, in brief he was put in complete charge of all the goods travelling to and from the Hijaz and of outfitting the army and supplying it with its needs.⁴ Clearly al-Mahruqi was necessary to the commercial life of the country and the *wali* made full use of his talents. Al-Mahruqi's son Hassan later expanded the Red Sea trading links to India before Britain put a stop to that trade.⁵ As trade with Europe increased, al-Mahruqi lost some of his importance, or at least he is mentioned less frequently in the sources.

Muhammad Ali made use of minorities as his specialists. Many of the French technocrats who had come to Egypt with the French army of occupation stayed on after the army had evacuated the country. Others flocked to Egypt in search of jobs when Napoleon's empire collapsed and the army disbanded. Still others, like the Saint-Simonians, came to Egypt in hope of building modern pyramids. The Saint-Simonians believed that the orient was destined to become the teacher of the old world, because the spirit of liberalism there had become 'an invincible obstacle to all great achievements'. Egypt was a *tabula rasa* and there 'individualism and its conquests do not hinder the march of genius'. The Egyptian monuments they had seen during the French occupation struck them with their grandeur and magnitude, and they thought they could erect technocratic monuments in Egypt that would show Europe what technology could do. Europe lacked 'faith in its rulers and the practice of obedience. It will learn it from the orient.' So wrote Lambert, one of the men who served Egypt long and well.⁶ To Lambert

and the Saint-Simonians the sight of thousands of Egyptians working together to dig a canal was a marvel, for in Europe, they maintained, such a mass of workers would have rebelled and sown discord, while Egypt still retained 'the ancient religion of industry'. Women and children working together with the men, far from inspiring repugnance or pity, inspired the Frenchmen with thoughts of more workers building more canals and dams.

Muhammad Ali knew that his Albanian friends and relations had a lot to learn from the west, and he hired the experts who could teach them. Most visitors from Europe were granted an audience with the ruler. All of them gave accounts, consciously or unconsciously, of how he picked their brains, asked about events in Europe, and especially about new machinery that had been invented and was used for various purposes. Ibrahim had inherited that curiosity about machinery and its function. Father and son had only to hear about a new machine to send for it and put it to use. In the middle of the Hijaz campaign, Ibrahim heard about a machine that made ice. His interest was heightened because of the hot climate in which he was forced to fight, and he bought two of these machines, one for himself and one for his father in Egypt. One author complained that on a trip he had taken with the pasha he had shared his tent and was woken up by him in the middle of the night because he wished to ask him questions. The *wali* needed very little sleep himself and had no sympathy for those who wanted to sleep the whole night through when he was impatient to get answers to all his questions. Greek merchants like the Tossizza, Anastasi and Casulli, French soldiers like Sève, Italian doctors like Bausani and Gaetani, etc. flocked to Egypt to serve the new ruler and to set up the projects that we shall describe later. The real administration of the country, however, was in the hands of Muhammad Ali's allies, family and supporters.

Apart from the members of his immediate family, his major associates were Albanians from Kavala, his birthplace, or Ottomans from various parts of the empire, e.g. Circassians, Georgians, Mingrelians, Laz, Greeks. The men from Kavala were also his relatives and in-laws. His two nephews, the Yakan brothers, held high military and civil rank, while his other nephew, Muhammad al-Sharif, was a director of finances and later governor of Damascus. His sons-in-law were Muhammad Bey al-Defterdar and Muharram Bey, governor of Alexandria and commander-in-chief of the navy. His third son-in-law, Yusuf Kamil, was an Ottoman who became a *bash muawin*. Among the leading Ottomans in the *wali*'s service were Muhammad Lazoglu, his *katkhoda*, and Muhammad al-Khazindar, who headed the treasury (*khazina*). Sami Bey, who came from Greece, was for many years the *bash muawin*,

while another Greek, Baqi Bey, was director of finances, a post which Ahmad Pasha al-Manikli, an Ottoman, also occupied. Most of the ranks of the civilian administration were therefore occupied either by relatives or by Ottomans, all of whom had thrown in their lot with the *wali* and stood to rise or fall with him.⁷

The military establishment, on the other hand, was dominated by mamluks, who filled the higher officer ranks, although some mamluks such as Khurshid Pasha, a Georgian, or Maho Bey, a Chiote, were civil administrators. These mamluks were either former *grande*s of Egypt who had defected to the winning side, sons of *grande*s, or slaves bought expressly for the purpose of manning the officer corps. It was only when the Ottomans put an embargo against the sale of mamluks to Egypt that the *wali* was forced to look elsewhere for his officers.

The leading ulama, especially the rector of al-Azhar, the heads of two powerful sufi fraternities, al-Bakri and al-Sadat, and the marshal of the notables, were perforce his men, since his support was necessary to maintain them in office, and they were necessary to help him keep the population quiescent. Lastly there were the Coptic administrators, like Muallim Girgis al-Gawhari and Muallim Ghali Sargios, who taught the *wali* all they knew about taxes and how to raise them. Together they helped him establish centralized power in place of the diffused decentralized mamluk system of government.

As far as the merchants were concerned, their association with Muhammad Ali was an extension of their earlier associations with the military. Through the new *wali* they hoped to reconstruct the lines of trade and commerce as in the past. The local *tujjar* hoped to retain that trade in their hands, since by then the French and foreign merchants had been cut out of the picture. By befriending the new *wali* they planned to gain total control of trade. The Syrian Christian merchants who had been displacing the Muslim merchants needed the *wali* for the same reason. They had risen to power with the assistance of past *walis*; they needed the new *wali* to continue to trade as successfully as in the past. To them it mattered little who ruled Egypt as long as they were permitted to continue in trade. The *wali* needed both these groups of merchants for they each had an area of expertise that would enrich the state, and they were equally valuable.

Once the *wali* came to control the country, he turned to a third group of merchants and technocrats, the Europeans. These were men who had links with the western markets, and had the connections and know-how that could extend local production on the international scene. They showed the *wali* how much richer he could become by trading through them and with them, and convinced him of the advantages of a western

trading partner. No doubt the Muslim and even the Syrian Christian *tujjar* were disgruntled when the *wali* turned to western merchants, and even to Greek merchants, but by then they had little option left but to continue their association with him. Having helped him come to power and control the government of the country, the Muslim *tujjar* found themselves gradually displaced in favour of other ethnic groups.

As far as Muhammad Ali was concerned, we need to ask to what end did all these machinations lead? To gain independence, insisted Drovetti as far back as 1807. Muhammad Ali wanted to create an independent state for himself and sought alliances with France and Britain to achieve that end. The Piedmontese was not the only one to hold that belief: it was shared by his British counterpart in Egypt. Ali Bey al-Kabir had tried to do the same, only to find himself betrayed by his erstwhile supporters who sold him out to the Ottomans in return for his position in Egypt. Muhammad Ali prevented the possibility of such a coup by destroying most potential opposition to his rule in Egypt and coopting the rest. The Ottomans were in the throes of their own revolution and Sultan Mahmud was not secure enough to tilt with his vassal. Planning, time and luck paid off, and Muhammad Ali could with justification declare himself the sole master of Egypt.

The sole master was nonetheless constrained to rule with the assistance of others, and these others he found in his own family. The manner in which he dealt with his family and his relations is significant, for it was an echo of the manner with which he ruled the country.

Muhammad Ali had thirty children. In a family as large as that it is difficult to believe that he was close to any of the younger children who were born in Egypt at a time when he was involved in fighting for survival and too busy to pay more than cursory attention to their welfare. His relationships with his eldest sons and with his grandson Abbas are fairly well documented.

Of his female children only Tevhide, Nazli and Zainab IV lived to become adults; the other ten died as small children. Tevhide was married to Muharram Bey and died in 1830 at the age of 33, while Nazli was married to Muhammad Defterdar, and outlived her father to die at the age of 61 in 1860. Zainab, the fourth daughter to bear the name successively – all the others having died in infancy – died at the age of 59. She was married to Yusif Kemal Pasha, the grand vizier, but divorced him when she caught him sleeping with her slave, threatening to commit suicide if she were not granted a divorce.

Among his seventeen sons, only Ibrahim, Tussun, Ismail, Said, Husain, Abdal-Halim and Muhammad Ali the Younger reached manhood. Said, Abdal-Halim and Muhammad Ali the Younger outlived

their father. The rest of the thirty died as children, so that in fact Muhammad Ali had only ten children whom he knew. His two youngest sons were sired when the pasha was 63 or 64 years old.

The *wali*'s naming of his sons was most revealing. Two of his sons were named Iskandar, i.e. Alexander, for whom the father had a great deal of admiration and about whom he read much. Five of the sons were successively named Halim or Abdal-Halim. The term in Arabic comes from the root *hlm* which means clemency, forbearance, tolerance, magnanimity, patience. It is one of two qualities which Arab historians have attributed to Muawiya, the founder of the Umayyad caliphate. The other quality was political finesse (*daha*). The pasha was blessed with both these qualities, but he obviously prized the first particularly. In choosing to name his sons Halim, the pasha was both describing what he believed to be his foremost quality, and also begging the Almighty to continue granting it to him.

The pasha's relationship with his sons was aloof when they were young; they were brought up in the harem until a certain age then handed over to tutors. From the age of twelve the boys were treated as adults and given administrative responsibilities. At the same time they were provided with mentors to guide and teach them their new functions. Like all parents he was capable of showing them affection, yet equally capable of chastising them when the occasion arose. His punishments were never cruel, despite his frequent threats they would be. Yet that was an age of extreme cruelty towards children. In the west children were whipped until they bled. Both in the east and in the west the poor were forced to bond their children. Muhammad Ali by and large was a generous and tolerant father, but a clear-sighted man who saw his children's weaknesses and analysed them in an objective, almost clinical manner. They were his sons but they were also members of his administration, and he looked at them in that dual capacity.

Muhammad Ali's two older sons had arrived in Cairo on 28 August 1805 when Ibrahim (1789-1848) was barely 16 years old and Tussun was four years younger. Their father had been *wali* hardly a month and his position was still precarious. He had been separated from his children for four years. The day following their arrival, the elder of the two boys was installed by his father as governor of the citadel in Cairo. A year later, in October 1806, Ibrahim was on his way to Istanbul as a hostage. That year in Istanbul must have been the reason for Ibrahim's disenchantment with the Ottomans, a feeling that later turned to one of outright animosity and contempt for them, their government and their military character. Unlike his father, Ibrahim never identified with the Ottomans. He learned Arabic and spoke it with his men, and

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was wont to call himself an Egyptian and not a Turk, much to his father's chagrin.

On his return to Egypt in autumn 1807, Ibrahim was appointed *defterdar* by the sultan, a position he held until 1813.⁸ Finances and shortage of funds plagued the *wali* and he needed someone on whom he could rely absolutely to do his bidding, someone who would raise the necessary cash without cheating him of part of it. As inspector-general of accounts, Ibrahim's function was to raise as much money from the population as he could, which earned him the odium of the *multazim* he was dispossessing.

Tussun (1793–1816), the younger son, was destined for less important but showier tasks. He was placed at the head of the Hijaz army against the Wahhabis in 1809, and given the title of 'pasha with two horse tails' by the sultan.⁹ At the time the *wali* was preoccupied with internal matters and had simply named his son to the position to silence criticism from the Porte. The campaign was to take place only two years later. The fact that Tussun was granted the title of pasha before his older brother has caused historians to wonder why. Some believed that it was because the *wali* was fonder of Tussun, who had winning ways, than of Ibrahim, especially when Tussun had remained by his side when Ibrahim was a hostage. Others used it to invent the myth that Ibrahim was not Muhammad Ali's son but his stepson. In these suppositions the missing ingredient was that Muhammad Ali had no authority to grant titles; he had not made one son a pasha and neglected the other. The granting of titles was an imperial prerogative. The sultan granted a title to Tussun to encourage a campaign which meant a great deal to the throne but as yet little to Muhammad Ali, and assumed the title would be an inducement to hasten the expedition. As far as the *wali* was concerned, Ibrahim was doing the truly critical task of raising the funds he needed; he could not be spared to go abroad and fight the sultan's wars, but Tussun could.

In one of the rare letters we have dating from before 1820, there is one from the *wali* to the sultan dated January 1812 in which he wrote:

God has given me three sons who are as dear to me as my life or my sight. I cannot separate myself from one of them for a second. And yet I have sent my eldest son, the *defterdar* of Egypt to the Sudan [chasing mamluks] and I have not seen him for 6 months ... I have appointed my other son Tussun Ahmad Pasha for the Hijaz mission ... Though separation from my two sons tears my heart ... I did it to serve my master.¹⁰

The *wali* could have scarcely written in that fashion were Ibrahim only an adopted son. Neither would the sultan have accepted him as a

hostage. Ibrahim and his father closely resembled each other physically, although morally they were very different and clashes between father and son were to become frequent later on. Yet the only letters that show glimmers of affection were the ones the *wali* sent Ibrahim when he was fighting in the Sudan with his brother Ismail. In one letter the father wrote: 'My son, I love you and your brother Ismail [Tussun had died in 1816]. [You] are the soul in my body and the light in my eyes and yet I have sent you to these miserable lands and loaded you with so heavy a burden in order to gain for ourselves and for our family fame and high rank.'¹¹ In a footnote to that letter he added, 'Though our bodies are [physically] separated and far apart yet our hearts are [morally] united and that spiritual communion gives us joy.'

All his letters to his other sons bear terms of affection like 'my soul' (*canim*), 'flesh of my blood' or literally 'sliver of my liver' (*faldhat kabidi*), but in none does such open affection as in the above letter exist. Later on the exchanges between the two men take on the affectionate character of two old colleagues, although Ibrahim always wrote with great respect to his father. He was, however, equally capable of writing in the tone of an irate commander-in-chief who was not getting proper support from the civilians back home. Clashes over the promotion of Egyptians to the rank of officers broke out between the two men; clashes over policy and tactics occasioned a break as we shall eventually discover.

Ibrahim in later life was described thus: he was a short, fat man with large, clear blue eyes, a high forehead and a brownish red beard struggling from beneath a face much marked by small-pox. His appearance suggested an active, intelligent man full of enterprise and eager for instruction.¹² A writer who knew him at first hand, Dr W. H. Yates, said Ibrahim was

always dignified and just; his word is law; he is firm and resolute, valiant and though a strict disciplinarian, kind and indulgent; and he never expects the meanest man in his army to do that which he would not do himself. No man is more rigorously obeyed, for he is able to punish; nevertheless, he is in full possession of the hearts of his soldiers.

His behaviour in the field was similar to that of the common soldiers; for he would sleep on the bare ground, and even the bare snow as in Anatolia, which crippled him with rheumatism and gave him the consumption that later killed him. He referred to his soldiers as his children (*awlad*), and his rallying cry before a charge was 'C'mon boys' ('Yallah ya awlad'). Often short-tempered and irascible, he learnt to curb his temper in his later years. When danger was at hand he was

always cool and clear-headed, and displayed intrepid courage at all times.¹³

Nubar, who became Ibrahim's private secretary after the Syrian campaigns, and who was Boghos' nephew gives a different view of the man. He describes Ibrahim and his father as being 'very mistrustful' and explains that Ibrahim had chosen him, Nubar, as a secretary because he was trying to allay his father's suspicions towards himself and so chose a nephew of Boghos' assuming that Nubar would spy for his uncle, and the *wali*. Nubar described Ibrahim as a 'cruel conqueror, a pitiless lover of justice', but added that both the man and his father were 'good judges of men'.¹⁴ Nubar added that Ibrahim had a reputation for cruelty and was feared even by Abbas. On the other hand most of the archival material at our disposal reveals Abbas to be a cruel brute capable of acts of great refinement in the repertoire of sadistic deeds, for which he was often rebuked by his grandfather. Ibrahim was the only family member who was never censured for cruelty, unlike Abbas and Ismail who had to be restrained. Yet Nubar writes that when Ibrahim died his entire household were as happy as at a wedding and the only one who showed red eyes from strain was Nubar himself. The members of the household mistakenly assumed the red eyes to arise from weeping for the departed master and he was told, 'You're the only one who weeps for Ibrahim'.¹⁵ Jabarti likewise gave us an image of a cruel and extortionate Ibrahim, which he may well have been before he had become secure and established in his position.

The truth about Ibrahim probably lies somewhere in between the two extremes. He was just and fair and strict with his soldiers, and it is with the army that his reputation is the finest.

His correspondence with his father reveals a general dedicated to the welfare of his troops, a man who rebuked his father when the well-being of his men was at stake. During the Syrian campaign, letter upon letter was sent to Cairo until the father took offence and all communications between the two men went through the chief secretary (*bash muawin*); the tenor of the letters was 'Are these men not counted amongst humanity? There is no justification for allowing our soldiers to be gnawed by hunger just to save the government money ('*tawfir al-naqd li-l hukuma*').'¹⁶ His soldiers appreciated his efforts on their behalf and were well disciplined and a capable fighting force. They did, however, revolt when they had been starved, through lack of funds, because rather than live off the land Ibrahim had insisted that they pay for all they took from the population.

As an administrator Ibrahim was efficient and able, but his actions in an age when the ruler was absolute and life was cheap would appear

cruel in the modern world, although by the lights of his period he was regarded as a just man.

Unlike his father, Ibrahim was an educated man who had one of the largest libraries in the land, including some 9,000 volumes in Turkish, Arabic, Persian and Armenian. The works dealt with astronomy, astrology, medicine, history and travel¹⁷ as well as poetry and literature. He was fascinated by machinery, and his farm was the first to use steam power to irrigate the land.¹⁸

Ibrahim was his father's right hand man, but Tussun may well have been the father's favourite. He had a gentle and sunny disposition, unlike his quick-tempered older brother and his dour and arrogant younger brother, Ismail. He was extremely popular with the army and with the populace. The men loved him for his generosity and affability, and he often opposed his father's sterner actions and interceded with him in favour of the people. He could also be capricious and extravagant. When his father reproached him for his prodigality and compared it with his own frugal manner of living, Tussun allegedly answered, 'You were not the son of a viceroy, but I am Muhammad Ali's son and have to show myself generous'.¹⁹ Tussun fought bravely in the Wahhabi campaign, but he was not really a first-class general, and his victory had little to do with his personal qualities. On his return home for rest and recreation he contracted plague, allegedly from one of his harem beauties. Within ten hours of the onslaught of the disease in his palace near Rosetta, where he was guarding the coasts, he died. Muhammad Ali, stunned at the sudden death, followed the funeral bier from Bulaq where it had landed to the cemetery, weeping all the way until the body was buried in a plot in the Imam Shafii cemetery.

Ismail (1775-1822), the third son, came to Egypt later with his mother in 1809, and therefore spent the formative years of his life away from his father, whom he knew at a distance. He never struggled with his father against their common enemies within the country, and the camaraderie that existed between the father and the two older sons was absent. Equally absent may have been the affection that had developed between the *wali* and Tussun when, with Ibrahim in Istanbul, he was the only son at his side. Ismail came to Egypt when his father was well established as *wali* and his two brothers had won renown in the land. At the age of twenty-five he had been sent to wage the Sudan campaign. By then Tussun had died in 1816, Ibrahim had successfully brought the Wahhabi wars to an end and razed Dariyya, the Wahhabi capital, to the ground, returning to Egypt a hero in 1819. Ismail had to contend with these glowing reputations and seek to emulate them in the Sudan.

Unfortunately the means he used to impress Muhammad Ali were

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distasteful to his father. In an excess of zeal after a battle he sent his father 300 pairs of Shaiqiyya ears. The father rebuked him, writing

It is well known among governors who are guided by reason that the way to gain the affection of their people is through spreading justice ... it is clear that no ruler can do anything without justice ... it was your duty to gain the trust of the Shaiqiyya by kindness and just treatment ... instead you have alienated them ... Have you not heard how people behave in times of war? Have you not heard how just the French were in Egypt? ... Do you no longer remember the justice and kindness the English showed not so long ago?²⁰

The principle of just rule was one the father assumed he followed in Egypt – justice not necessarily to be confounded with kindness or gentleness. Ismail had been given two seasoned veterans as his military advisors and ordered to consult them before he took any decision. In his arrogance Ismail disregarded his father's advice and chose to appoint another officer as his advisor, much to the father's wrath, who wrote demanding an explanation:

How can you name as your A.D.C. a man ignorant of the science of war, who has never been in any battle, and put him in a position of authority over the heads of men experienced in the art of war like Ahmad Agha and Abdi Kashif [his nominees]? How can you expect them to accept him as their leader? If they feign an outward acceptance they would never in their hearts accept him. Such actions lead me to assume that you have committed other reprehensible acts and that you do not heed my advice. Do you not know that your absolutism and fatuousness can bring about disastrous consequences?²¹

Not content with that broadside, three days later Muhammad Ali sent a second one in which he told his son that the function of a commander-in-chief was to exercise good management, perspicacity and affability in his relationships with his officers. He warns him of the consequences of absolute authority and recommends that he obey his father's advice on pain of arousing his anger and bringing swift punishment in consequence.²²

Ismail did not seem amenable to advice, for more rebuke was forthcoming when his father accused him of indulging in 'childish behaviour'. Finally, in exasperation, the father wrote: 'If you choose to love yourself above love of your men, I will not love you ... If you will not heed my words, I swear to drag you back and imprison you in a small hut, for shame cannot be tolerated.'²³

Ismail's disregard of his father's advice to treat the population with clemency and kindness brought about his own undoing. He treated the conquered Sudanese population with great cruelty and humiliated their rulers. One of these rulers was so offended by Ismail's insults that he set

fire to his hut and burnt him alive. Muhammad Ali grieved over his son's terrible death, and extracted vengeance from the Sudanese by worse atrocities committed on them by his son-in-law the *defterdar*.

Although Ismail had been a source of disappointment to the father, the greatest burden the whole family had to bear seemed to be that of Tussun's son, Abbas.

Abbas (1813–1854) orphaned at the age of four, had been raised by his grandfather in much the same fashion as the other royal children. One of the earliest letters addressed to him by his grandfather was one of gently couched reproach that he had been indolent in the pursuit of his studies: 'My son, my soul, if that be true it is not seemly that you spend your days without studying. Show us your zeal and return to your previous diligent ways and inform us as to which *sura* you have reached in learning the Quran, and what are the subjects you have read. We would also wish to see samples of your handwriting.'²⁴ He added a postscript warning the boy not to listen to those detractors who told him that he would attain a high position regardless, for if he did not study, he would be given no position, not even one dirhem.

Three months later he was urged to send his exercise books for his grandfather's inspection. This was followed by an irate letter to his *kathoda* ordering him to see to it that Abbas pursued his studies or the *wali* would come and pluck the *kathoda*'s beard for him.²⁵

Abbas seemed to be not only slothful but a dunce. His grandfather constantly complained that he neglected his studies, did no physical exercise, no horse-riding or walking, but simply went hunting, which the *wali* regarded as of little value and mere self-indulgence. When Abbas requested a new horse, the *wali* refused, 'unless he pursue his studies, in which case all his requests would be granted'.²⁶

Abbas was, if anything, persistent and would not take no for an answer. A week later another letter from his grandfather continued in no uncertain terms to refuse him the horse he wanted. This time it was couched in the third person. 'His Highness's actions are contrary to reason and wisdom and simply capricious. He already has far too many horses. We want a complete list of all the animals in his *daira*',²⁷ the letter ends threateningly. A few months later Abbas requested a houseboat. His grandfather refused that extravagance with indignation, pointing out that Abbas already had a houseboat in Bulaq and a boat in Mansura.²⁸

Muhammad Ali was a stickler for protocol and proper appearances. When someone reported seeing Abbas wearing a bedouin cloak the *wali* was incensed. Was this his strict Ottoman identity speaking out or was there more? He fired off a letter to the hapless *kathoda* who was

addressed as 'donkey' (*eshek*). 'Have we ever worn a cloak for you to allow Abbas Pasha to carry out his childish whims at will? Such behaviour will force us to punish him which we do not wish to do. See that he puts an end to caprice and returns to his studies.'²⁹

Abbas could do nothing right. Every month he received a letter pointing out some misdemeanour and ordering him to pursue his much hated studies diligently. He was expected to send in monthly reports with a full timetable of his activity, the chapters and pages of the textbooks he had read and samples of the different scripts he was learning. A glance at his timetable for the month of Shaban 1245 explains why Abbas did not seem to enjoy the studies, on which he was expected to spend more than eleven hours every day.³⁰ According to Arabic time a new day began at sunset and continued until the following sunset. The twenty-four hours were divided into two lots of twelve, with twelve o'clock evening marking sunset and twelve o'clock morning marking sunrise. Abbas was supposed to spend 2-5 Arabic time (8-11 a.m.) reading mathematics and geometry; from 5 to 6 (11-12 a.m.) was lunchtime followed by an hour and a half of calligraphy, and an hour and a half of grammar. He then took off half an hour for a walk, and spent the following three hours studying Arabic parsing, which brought the time to roughly 3 o'clock Arabic time of the new day, or 9 p.m. It is little wonder that Abbas rebelled at such an iron discipline and announced that he no longer wished to work with tutors and would study at his own pace, when he felt like it. Muhammad Ali gave up on him and concluded, 'He is incapable of work and shows proof of a crude nature.'³¹ Abbas was ordered to return to his rigid schedule, but broke out in occasional bouts of truancy. While rebellion taught Abbas that he could not coerce his grandfather, it also taught him the virtues of manipulation and intrigue in order to get his way. It equally confirmed the grandfather in his low estimation of his grandson's capabilities, and throughout his lifetime Muhammad Ali was to refer to Abbas as 'indolent' (*happa*).

By the time the Syrian campaign had begun in 1831, Abbas at 18 was deemed ready for military life and was sent off to learn how to become an officer under the tutelage of his uncle Ibrahim. He was as little suited to military life as he had been to the life of a scholar. Complaints about his military behaviour, or lack thereof, flowed regularly from Ibrahim. Abbas was negligent, refused to obey orders, behaved heedlessly in times of crisis, was careless and, much worse, he was gun-shy and a coward. Ibrahim in high indignation wrote to his father, 'If he [Abbas] were devoid of courage but at least paid attention to his duties, or at least would order others to do their duty ... one might accept his failings, but

he neither works nor allows others to work, he is neither brave nor attentive towards his responsibilities. His rank and background should lead him to set a good example for others to follow.'³² A year later Ibrahim gave up on him and asked that he be recalled, 'All my efforts to train him are fruitless', he explained. 'I have no time to undertake his education since I am occupied with military matters.'³³

Abbas returned to Cairo, and bore a grudge against his uncle that was to last till the end of his days. His resentment against his grandfather and his uncle was to surface later on when he headed a party of opposition to Ibrahim. Upon his return to Cairo, Abbas was appointed governor of the province of Gharbiyya in the mistaken belief that he might pull himself together and show some talent in government when given a position of responsibility. A year later he was in serious trouble. The *wali* had warned him repeatedly not to be brutal towards the population, which he was inclined to be and showed a clear streak of sadism. That time he went too far when he condoned the death of his baker. It was rumoured that he had had the mouth of one of his harem women sewn up when he caught her smoking, and the woman starved to death. Since Abbas was a homosexual, one doubts that he was much interested in what his harem women did, so the story may be apocryphal, then again it might not. Cruel, inept, indolent and incompetent Abbas certainly was, but he was a member of the family and had to be found a place within the state apparatus. He was a great disappointment to his grandfather, who had deluded himself into believing that the son of Tussun would have the father's qualities. In one of his letters the *wali* began by threatening to recall Abbas and appoint someone else in his place, but in a postscript he added, 'You have dashed my hopes in you. I had hoped you would bring joy to my heart by performing your duties conscientiously. Look at your uncle. And me in my old age. Truly your indolence has pained me exceedingly. Abbas, you must pull yourself together and set aside self-indulgence in favour of earnest work.'³⁴ Muhammad Ali and Ibrahim were obviously the wrong examples to offer Abbas and simply fed his resentment against his elders. In another letter the *wali* reproached Abbas for his ruthlessness and advised him to go round and make amends to those whom he had offended, adding that that 'is fitting behaviour' for 'to act like a lion befits savages and does not befit someone in your position'.³⁵

In time the *wali* gave up on Abbas and the letters of remonstrance diminished. Abbas was given responsible positions in the administration, but both grandfather and uncle despised him. Abbas knew their feeling and repaid it by hating them both, although he was careful to keep his feelings about his grandfather to himself until the *wali* fell ill

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and Ibrahim had died. When he became *khedive* his animosity towards his grandfather surfaced in the mean funeral he gave him.

Muhammad Ali's fourth son, Said, was born on 17 March 1822/1237. He was brought up in the same fashion as his nephew Abbas except that he had an extra weight to carry, that of several pounds of fat. Said was interested in his studies and by the age of three the father was pleased to learn that his son could read five pages in 15 days and had learnt the Quran up to the fifth *sura*.³⁶ The *wali* then suggested that the portions of the Quran be copied and bound separately and given to Said to learn piecemeal to make it easier for him to memorize and so build up his sense of accomplishment.³⁷ Said was praised for being diligent and the father kept close watch on his progress. Muhammad Ali demanded that he be kept informed of which books the boy was reading, how many new words a day were learnt, thus carefully following all details of the boy's education, even in the midst of his campaigns. He constantly stressed his admiration and respect for education to his children. He advised Said to learn while he was still young, 'for learning in youth is durable, like an inscription cut in stone'.³⁸

Muhammad Ali, who was himself illiterate until the age of 47, wanted his children to have the best education. Every letter to Said and the other royal children carried the same message, 'Study! Learn!'. By the time that Said was 11 years old, he had learnt Turkish, Arabic, Persian, and was given two European tutors to teach him languages, geometry, and mathematics. When a plague epidemic broke out that year his father ordered that he be quarantined and his tutors along with him so that he could continue his studies. Said learnt French and English, but being a shy boy, probably because of his corpulence, he would not bring himself to speak these languages. When Muhammad Ali found that out, he ordered the boy to make the rounds of the major European consuls daily and address them in French until he shed his timidity and could use the language fluently.³⁹ Such Draconian measures worked and Said came to like and befriend the French consul, Ferdinand de Lesseps, with dramatic consequences for Egypt.

At the age of 13 Said became an ensign in the navy. He was placed in the charge of the admiral of the fleet, Matush Pasha, who was told to treat Said on board ship as he would any other ensign, and to grant him no special treatment. To his son Muhammad Ali wrote:

Do you remember that I told you that the King of England had served in the navy as a lieutenant and rose in the ranks like all other officers until he became an admiral, shortly after which he became king? So long as you remain on board a vessel remember that you are nothing but an ensign. You are to carry out your allotted tasks and to learn naval arts and sciences, and to obey your senior

officers. I sent you to the navy in the hope that you will become a beacon for the family. Rumours have reached my ears that you do not stand to attention for your superiors and that the Pasha [Matush] does not sit in your presence until you give him leave. My son, apple of my eye, I have sent you to the navy according to British custom, and while you are there you are to behave like an ensign should, you are nothing but a junior officer on board and should be so treated. Off ship you are Muhammad Ali's son and all owe you deference and respect. The more you broaden your education and knowledge the more your reputation will be enhanced.⁴⁰

Like Abbas, Said got his share of scolding, although in a much milder manner since his sins were minor. His major shortcoming was his corpulence which offended the *wali*, and which he was ordered to lose by climbing the ship's masts twice daily.⁴¹ Exercise seemed to have little effect on fat Said, who at the age of 13 weighed 195 lbs. His irate father showed little sympathy and wrote, 'I am disgusted at your weight ... it is in your power to lose that corpulence which offends all people and to acquire a slim body ... should you arrive in Alexandria in your former shape I will exile you to a small house and keep you there.' Muhammad Ali had never had a weight problem himself, for he ate very frugally, or he might have shown more sympathy towards an insecure adolescent who found refuge in eating.

I have advised you time after time, orally and in writing, but my efforts were fruitless and I am deeply pained ... your tutor has tried to conceal your condition and to protect and encourage your hateful corpulence ... I have been forced to spy on you ... Should I find you equally fat I shall put you in the charge of a rough man and make you walk every day as I did with Abbas ... I will not permit people to humiliate me and say that I am incapable of educating my sons when I educate the sons of all the others.⁴²

Some of the threats had an effect and on occasion Said would slough off 2 lbs a week and earn a warm letter of commendation from his father. Any activity that was believed to reduce weight was condoned. For example the *wali* was informed that Said was galloping his horse all over Alexandria and did not stop to greet passers-by. Such rude conduct would ordinarily have brought a stinging rebuke from the *wali* who was a stickler for proper behaviour, but since he believed galloping to be a means of losing weight Said was forgiven.⁴³

Any action that savoured of arrogance or of conceit on the part of any individual member of the family was instantly rebuked by the pasha, yet he enjoined on them pride of family and of name. Muhammad Ali heard that Said was helped out of his bunk in the morning by his *agha* and sent an immediate letter scolding the *agha* and threatening to throw him into the sea if he did not stop indulging Said.⁴⁴ Another letter was sent to

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Said reproaching him for being slothful and consorting with the wrong kind of people,

... ignorant old-fashioned sea captains who have no learning and little respect for education ... My son ... your father was well brought up from his youth and with time polite manners became second nature ... If a youth does not acquire good manners when young ... he is devoid of human characteristics and can best be described as bestial ... duty impresses upon you the task of consorting with learned people ... you are cursed with that damnable trait of arrogance ... beware my son ... acquire traits of modesty. Your uncle Ibrahim rid himself of that trait and he is 28 years older [sic].⁴⁵

Ibrahim was in fact 33 years older. That letter clearly demarcates the *wali*'s values. Education ranked at the top of the scale, followed closely by good manners and by modesty. That was the proper pattern for young princes to follow, to enable them to rule wisely and knowledgeably, to be liked by their people and to make their name glorious. In another passage in that same letter Muhammad Ali revealed his thoughtfulness and kindness towards inferiors, when they were not guilty of wrongdoing. Said's tutor in Persian was a mystic who despised social graces that smacked of modernity, which he anathemized as innovation (*bida*). He was particularly offended over Said's use of a knife and fork at meal times. The *wali* advised his son to permit the tutor to eat in his own quarters rather than at the prince's table, but warned him to make sure that the tutor's food was as good as that served the prince.

Said never lost his corpulence, but he did study assiduously and he did acquire a sense of humanity towards his people in contrast to Abbas' undoubted brutality.

The younger princes were just as severely controlled and their noses kept to the academic grindstone as had been the case with Said and Abbas. They did have one extra bonus in that Ahmad Rifat and Ismail, Ibrahim's sons, and Abdal-Halim and Husain, Muhammad Ali's sons, were sent to study in France in the Egyptian Mission School. While they were in Egypt they were made to go through all the requisite Arabic, Persian and Turkish studies including grammar, poetry, calligraphy, mathematics and geometry.

That love for education that the *wali* evinced was shared fully by his son Ibrahim, who had an extensive library and in the middle of his campaigns would ask that certain books be sent out to him. When his son Ismail, who was struck with ophthalmia, visited the father in Syria he set him to learning poetry and rewarded him by allowing him to ride a horse. Ismail learnt the poetry rapidly but recited it in the Hijazi and Persian style, much to the amusement of the father and his friends.⁴⁶

In Paris the princes were never far removed from their sire's constant

homilies and sermons, and their daily schedules were sent home for approval. At one time Husain, who seemed to have been going through some sort of crisis, received a letter from his father which read:

My son, whoever begins an undertaking with feelings of despair and a belief that he will not succeed will undoubtedly fail ... but he who says there is no impossible and begins to work with true determination will undoubtedly reap the rewards of his efforts. My birth and upbringing were in a town deprived of learning and education so I grew up deprived of both, but my natural disposition led me to set aside hesitation and doubt in any undertaking and taught me to take effort and zeal as debts upon myself. You will learn as you grow older and mature that I have performed great deeds out of nothing. As for you my son, you will attain ... in the city of light ... the arts and sciences where learning in all its branches is established, that city where countless great men were reared and which continues to rear others equally great. My son, my flesh and blood, show me your zeal and work diligently ... learn that the dearest wish of my old age is to see you multiplying your energy to please and delight me so that I might see you in the near future become counted among the superior and the knowledgeable.⁴⁷

This letter as do most of the pasha's letters to his sons, shows the esteem in which he held learning. To him that was an open sesame to success. But that letter also reveals that Muhammad Ali had an open-ended personality, one that recognized few ego boundaries or limits to possibilities. These were not simply words of encouragement sent to a despondent son who was lonely, alienated in a foreign country and undergoing cultural shock; these were words that defined the father's credo, and described his own self-image. Success had come to him beyond his wildest dreams; it had not been easy, but he had achieved the impossible; how much more could his sons, armed with a modern education, achieve. To Halim the *wali* wrote:

My love for the arts and the sciences and my profound desire to educate you and make you cultured overcome my repugnance at being separated from you ... acquire reason ... learn that you are a pupil like all the others and obey those above you and treat every individual well and train yourself day and night to become modest, diligent and so gain good repute and my joy and favour, and become respectable among men.⁴⁸

Discipline and self control were the key notes to Muhammad Ali's nature and he desperately wanted his sons to acquire similar traits. Likewise he prized modesty and detested any show of arrogance. At one time he rebuked Ibrahim for signing his orders in Syria 'Ser Asker Arabistan', and wrote '... be satisfied with [signing] "Ibrahim" alone just as your father takes pride in the name "Muhammad Ali", devoid of any title. Direct your zeal towards gaining a reputation through your

positive achievements and your name will become inscribed in the pages of time.⁴⁹ It is true that Muhammad Ali never used any of his titles in his correspondence, but it seems that some of the annoyance over Ibrahim's title was that it included the word 'Arabistan' as though Ibrahim were setting up an Arab kingdom, which he may well have thought of doing. Muhammad Ali was very conscious of his Ottoman heritage and it pained him to see Ibrahim set it aside in favour of an Arab title, or a title that smacked of an Arab connection rather than an Ottoman one.

Like many parents, Muhammad Ali had little faith in the natural qualities of his children and set himself the task of moulding their characters into his own image, or into what he thought was his own image. Lest they deviate from the strict directives he gave, he placed spies in each of his sons' households and learned every detail of their life-styles. In the case of the older sons this may have been motivated by political caution, for he trusted no one, not even his sons, but in the case of the younger ones it was to make sure that he was obeyed to the letter. In spite of the threats he frequently made, he never punished any of the sons, save for refusing to grant a favour when displeased. Otherwise he did what most parents do; gave advice and accepted the outcome with some measure of equanimity. He had few illusions about his family and could dissect the members with a cold, clinical eye, a rare trait for a parent, at the same time that he loved and cared for them.

The same affection that Muhammad Ali bestowed on his sons he also showed to his daughters. At a time when women of the elite received little if any education at all, his daughters were given tutors and were educated. A letter to his wife expressed his pleasure at hearing that his eldest daughter was devoted to reading. A letter to his youngest daughter, probably Zainab, praised her proficiency at her lessons and the examples of the various scripts which she had sent him at his request. 'My fondest hope', he wrote, 'is to see you show zeal at reading and writing. Send me from time to time reports on your progress in learning.'⁵⁰

The daughters did not escape scoldings and homilies either. In a letter to his eldest daughter he explained that he did not begrudge them money for clothes, but when the requests exceeded the bounds of reason they departed from good taste, he scolded. 'If the mothers say "Are these clothes too much to ask for the offspring of the great?"', then answer, "The great in the eyes of the *sharia* is the one who constantly serves the people" ... accustom yourself to be satisfied with little and learn economy for the day when you will have to be responsible for your own expenses.'⁵¹ That letter was sent at a time when the Syrian

campaign was siphoning off all the ready cash in the treasury, but it also expressed a firm belief in the value of a lack of ostentation or show of luxury. He himself dressed simply and wore no decorations of any kind, save for a fob watch, unless he was trying to dazzle an Ottoman emissary. He expected his children to avoid excessive luxury as an unworthy trait in the sons of the great. In a sense there was an inverted snobbery to his ostensible simplicity. He believed that he and the members of his family did not need to show off; they were who they were, there was none better and no external signs were required to mark them out.

The one time the pasha came near to showing cruelty towards any of his children was in the case of his second oldest daughter, Nazli, the wife of the *defterdar*. Nazli was a debauched woman who led something of a scandalous existence, although it was kept somewhat hidden from her father. While her behaviour was not known outside palace circles, within the family she had a notorious reputation. She overstepped the bounds of the possible when she had one of her boon companions put to death. Her father heard of the incident which so offended his sense of morality and justice that he ordered Abbas to execute his aunt. Abbas spent the entire night pleading with his grandfather to spare his aunt's life, and at last the pasha gave in and rescinded the order.⁵²

Nubar Pasha's memoirs revealed a side of Muhammad Ali that had not appeared in any other material at our disposal. He recounted an incident in which he understood Ibrahim to tell him that the *wali* planned to have him, Ibrahim, assassinated. That incident took place in 1844 when tensions between father and son were high (see chapter 11 for details). In a public assembly Muhammad Ali had announced that there was a 'traitor', meaning Ibrahim, among them, and a 'covetous man', referring to Sharif Pasha, and he wanted them delivered up to him. The assembly was stunned, as were the two men in question who feared for their lives, or so Nubar informed us. Ibrahim then received a letter from his father filled with accusations of 'treacherous behaviour'. He determined to go to the palace and reason with his father, but he believed that that step might cost him his life. Ibrahim therefore ordered his men to be ready to strike should an attempt be made upon him. No attempt was in fact made and the quarrel between father and son was patched up, but Nubar believed that Ibrahim was convinced that his father was planning to murder him, and by the same token he was ready to murder his own father.⁵³

Nubar gave us another sidelight into Ibrahim's character, one that differed from our image of a gruff soldier-cum-administrator. He recounted that on one occasion when Ibrahim was in Europe he wept

because he saw the French countryside so beautiful and green when Egypt was so miserable: 'I will change all that if God gives me life', he told Nubar.⁵⁴ Along the same theme of a man dedicated to the betterment of his country, Nubar said that once when Ibrahim was sitting for a painting in Pisa in 1847 he suddenly shouted out loud, 'No, I will not die. God created me for the good of Egypt, to make her rich and prosperous. It would not be fair to recall me before I had made her breathe and be happy.'⁵⁵ By then Ibrahim was ill with tuberculosis and the disease was taking its toll, for he was to die a few months later. At the same time his father was ill and losing his senses because his European doctors had administered a dose of silver nitrate to cure his dysentery. The silver nitrate may have cured the dysentery but it also caused massive brain damage, and the old ruler became demented and began to 'have bouts of madness followed by lucidity'.⁵⁶ Others, who did not know about the drug, attributed these fits to 'senility' brought on by an aphrodisiac that he had imbibed when his daughter presented him with a new slave.

It was only a matter of time before Ibrahim was to become *wali* of Egypt in succession to his father. While in Europe, Ibrahim was only interested in visiting factories. He seemed to know all about industry and was up to date on all facets of progress, according to Nubar.⁵⁷ Nubar added that both Ibrahim and his father were kept abreast of European politics and economies, for the speeches of the ministers in the parliaments of both France and England were translated by Nubar daily and read by Ibrahim and his father.⁵⁸

Nubar characterized Ibrahim as having good sense leading to the limits of genius, but being avaricious like his father, and renowned for his ponderation. Ibrahim was cruel but believed in justice. One time in London he saw a drunk being led off to gaol by a policeman, and he turned to Nubar and remarked, 'There is the grandeur of Britain, not only in her factories', and he meant the respect for the law.⁵⁹ Nubar equally praised Muhammad Ali who was a fine judge of character. He added that the *wali* may have lacked 'instruction' but he certainly did not lack 'education'. Hekekyan, a much less shrewd and a more capricious observer, frequently changed his mind about the *wali*. In one passage he wrote, 'The great misfortune of the viceroy is his extreme avidity and profound ignorance of the arts and sciences.'⁶⁰ On another page he wrote, 'The viceroy is by nature so sensitive and humane',⁶¹ and on the same page he changed his mind and said that he was not generous, he was ostentatious, which belies his remark on avidity. In yet another place he wrote, 'The viceroy is really very liberal minded. A better and greater man than Mohamed Aly has not appeared and will not appear in Turkey.'⁶²

Hekekyan, who seemed to have been a bitter man with a touch of paranoia and who was disappointed in not becoming as influential as his other Armenian relations, therefore resenting them and his employers, regarded himself as an Englishman for he had been educated in England – he talked about the British as ‘we’. He looked upon Egypt from the viewpoint of an outsider with little sympathy for the place and less liking, but he also seemed to have suffered much at school in England. In a particularly vicious passage regarding the Egyptian princes who had been sent to be educated in France he wrote, ‘I should have recommended their parents to send them to England, and after a previous education in some of our public schools, when their insolence and pride would soon have been made to ooze out of their noses, they should be put into military and other special establishments.’⁶³

Muhammad Ali and Ibrahim worked together as a team. Muhammad Ali supplied caution and a brake on too rash movements, while Ibrahim supplied strategy, military prowess and the cement that kept the Egyptian army together and made his men fear and love him. The younger man was more liberal in his thinking and had more affection for the country of his adoption, which was the only country he really knew. The father was torn by his desire to remain an Ottoman, and his desire to create an empire. He despised the Egyptians, and while he understood Arabic perfectly he would only speak Turkish.⁶⁴ He admired the Ottomans, because he was a member of an ethnic and linguistic minority within the Ottoman empire yet looked upon himself as an Ottoman. To deny that would be a denial of his roots and being. Ibrahim had no problems of self-identity; he liked the Egyptians and hated and despised the Turks, therefore he was apt to be more ruthless towards the Ottomans and more radical. Together these two men and their associates were to carve an empire for themselves out of Ottoman territories, which became a mighty power for a brief moment of time. That empire diminished eventually, but it separated Egypt quite definitely from the Ottoman empire.

The new government in Egypt did not start out with a clear pattern of reform, or even with a clear idea of how to go about governing the country. Instead it adopted a series of *ad hoc* policies which arose from certain economic beliefs. These beliefs can best be described as forming a mercantilist approach. It was not that the *wali* and his men were self-consciously mercantilist, for, after all, the term was probably unknown to them, but they espoused economic policies which faithfully followed mercantilist principles.

Such of their policies as reflected mercantilist thought were the following. In the first place they felt the need for the accumulation of

bullion, which became an overriding concern throughout their years of administration. In the early years, 1805–11, the administration needed money to pay off the Albanian and Ottoman troops. Then it needed to import arms and ammunition to strengthen the army and stave off invasion. While the need for money is common to all states and is not in itself specifically mercantilist, the next steps the administration took, to accumulate capital in order to invest it in projects of agriculture and industry, were mercantilist. The search for capital led it from 1808 onwards to step up the export of agricultural commodities. A concomitant measure of such a step was the necessity to control agricultural resources so as to export as much as the government found necessary, and to coerce the fallahin into growing crops for export rather than for local consumption.

The success of exports to Europe led to the expansion of trade and commerce and the need for more commodities to export, with consequent changes in land tenure and taxation to meet that need, beginning in 1811 when *iltizamat* in Upper Egypt were confiscated. The capital accumulated from trade and agricultural commodities was invested in irrigation projects, starting with the Mahmudiyya canal. In turn, the irrigation projects, supported by barrages and dams, increased the area of agricultural land and permitted irrigation on a perennial basis in some parts of the country. As a result new crops were introduced.

When further capital was obtained it was invested in industry; at first it was invested in war-related industries in 1809, and went on to textiles and other manufactured commodities the following decade. Industry was to provide import substitution and cut down on imports, to develop new commodities that used local raw materials and which could be sold both internally and for export as a means of establishing a favourable balance of trade, dear to the heart of all mercantilists. The new government seldom exported more than it imported, for the machinery necessary to set up industry necessitated increased imports.

Once industry and manufactures were started, from then on, and in accordance with mercantilist logic, military expansion became inevitable in order to find markets for the finished products and raw materials lacking in Egypt to feed the new factories. There were other reasons that supplemented the economic ones and justified expansion overseas: the need for independence from Ottoman domination, as we shall see later, and maybe a need to glorify the name of Muhammad Ali and his family. The first foreign venture was the war in the Hijaz, 1811–19. This was followed by a campaign in the Sudan in 1820, which left Muhammad Ali master of an empire. The Morean campaign in 1824 was intended to add further territories to the *wali*'s holdings, and satisfy his goals of

controlling the commerce of the eastern Mediterranean, but instead it ended in a débâcle. The last two campaigns, the two wars in Syria in 1831-33 and in 1839-40, were to mark the beginning of the end for the empire and for the *wali*'s dreams of glory.

Whatever economic measures were to be carried out in the land, they were preceded and accompanied by internal developments geared towards facilitating the imposition of procedures aiming at maximum exploitation of resources with minimum local resistance. Law and order was re-established, the administration was centralized and *waliyy al-niam*, the benefactor, as Muhammad Ali was called, established a benevolent autocracy. How benevolent that autocracy was we shall see in later chapters.

Muhammad Ali was a master of compromise. Yet throughout his devious manoeuvres through the halls of economic and political intrigue he kept his sights fixed on the goal of independence. His policies and actions must therefore be interpreted in the light of a man who wanted to strengthen his position economically, militarily and politically, but who also hoped to wrest independence for himself and for his family.

Internal policies

Muhammad Ali conceived of Egypt as a *mulk*, a possession he had won by the sword. A legitimate monarch can take his time in planning for the future, secure – sometimes – in his knowledge that continuity will prevail. Muhammad Ali was neither a legitimate monarch, nor was he even secure, and he had strong doubts about any continuity for his line unless he took steps to establish and institute such continuity, by the sword if necessary. His actions were geared towards improving his *mulk* and making it yield greater profits, and towards establishing firm foundations for its government that would resist change and time. Such foundations led to the creation of a centralized bureaucracy, and involved a series of *ad hoc* decisions in response to circumstances, which in the final analysis created the trappings of a modern state. It was a piecemeal progression, a series of trials and errors that established a centralized authority, brought about a control of trade and commerce, the total reform of agriculture, the establishment of industry, and finally expansion beyond the frontiers of his territory.

The corner-stone of Muhammad Ali's internal policy in Egypt was law and order. That was the prime reason for which he had been supported by ulama and *tujjar*, who saw in him a potential Ali Bey ushering in a period of stability and security wherein they could go about their business. The upheavals which had swept the country over the last decades had played havoc with the financial and commercial life of the country. Agriculture had suffered when various armies had swept back and forth across the land and forced fallahin to flee for their lives. Marauding soldiery had preceded or succeeded bands of roving bedouin looking for easy prey and equally devastating village and soil. River pirates dominated the Nile, and boats sailing down to the capital with food were attacked and pirated, leaving the capital vulnerable to starvation. The bedouin who controlled the caravan routes had not been paid their dues by the bankrupt governments, and attacked all caravans. The British fleet had blockaded Egyptian ports and disrupted the flow of long-distance trade. In brief, the commercial life of the country was

not only at a standstill, but progressively deteriorating at a time when money was of the essence.

Once Muhammad Ali had defeated his opponents, his first task was to reinstitute law and order and allow the country to return to a normal life, and recover from the wounds inflicted on it by so many invaders and intruders. Sea trade was re-established with the full cooperation of the British fleet, for the British armies battling the French in the Iberian Peninsula needed Egyptian grain. The new government, conscious of the shortage of ships to ferry the produce from the hinterland to the ports, ordered the construction of a fleet of river boats, which effectively restored and expanded the channel of communication with Upper Egypt, the main granary. Egypt had few roads, the Nile being the main artery of communication. Anyone who controlled a portion of the river could waylay river traffic and prevent food from reaching the capital, as the mamluks formerly had done. The security of the capital depended on the uninterrupted flow of river traffic, and the finances of the state depended on the maximum trade with the outside world. River pirates were hounded and destroyed and the river was made secure.

In 1814/1229 the former system of governorates ruled by mamluk beys was reformed. A more centralized authority was set up, aimed at supervising and improving agricultural practices and extracting more surplus from the fallahin. The governorates were subdivided into departments (*aqsam*), each one under a *kashif*. The governorates (*wilayat*) formed a total of 13, if one counts the oases as one governorate. These were Girga, Manfalut, the oases, Ashmunain, Bahnasawiyya, Atfihiyya, Fayyum, Gharbiyya, Daqahliyya, Sharqiyya, Buhaira, Qaliubiyya, Giza. Later on Minufiyya was added, bringing the number of *wilayat* to 14. Jabarti refers to a new hierarchy of authority when he talks about 'governors of provinces, *kushaf* and aides' ('*hukam al-aqalim wa kushafuha wa nuwabuhum*').¹ French sources also mention the presence of a *qaim-maqam*. That measure of reform did not give full satisfaction and in 1825/1241 the viceroy decided to visit the provinces himself, and sent word to his governors in the following message:

When I divided the country into *aqsam* the reason was to facilitate the prosperity and progress of agriculture, but there is a lack of attention and of precision from the department heads (*mamurun aqsam*), and especially a lack of attention given to the growth of new imported crops ... I have thus decided to visit the corners of the country, and note shortcomings on the part of any *mamur*, *qaim-maqam*, district chief (*hakim khutt*), shaikh and overseer (*khawli*). I will gather them in the middle of the land that has been neglected, will order a hole dug and bury them alive.²

Egypt in the reign of Muhammad Ali

This message clearly underlines that the *wali*'s main preoccupation with reforms arose from a preoccupation with the development of agriculture and the supervision of the new crops that had recently been introduced. Later that year the country was reshuffled into new administrative divisions. Lower Egypt was divided into 14 *aqsam*, grouped under three units headed by the pasha, Ibrahim and the *defterdar*. Upper Egypt was divided into 10 *aqsam* grouped into two major units under the *kathoda* and Tahir Pasha. Each *qism* was governed by a *mamur*.³ Egypt had just suffered a plague epidemic and two consecutive years of drought, both of which had devastated the countryside and caused extreme hardship to the fallahin. These administrative changes were instituted in an effort to alleviate that distress, and to help the country recoup its losses.

Muhammad Ali took upon himself the active administration of affairs instead of leaving them in the hands of the *kikhya* or *kathoda bey* as had been the custom. Consul Salt wrote, 'He actually sits in judgement from 8-10 hours at his diwan every day', while his *kikhya* was sent round the country to determine 'the true cause of general misery'. Salt did not believe that the drought and the plague were sufficient causes, and attributed the misery to the fact that the government took two thirds of the produce.⁴

Sometime later these districts were grouped into provinces called *iqlim* and finally reformed into *mudiriyya*, governorates, headed by a *mudir*.⁵ At first there were seven provinces, then they increased in number and from 1830-4 they became ten, seven in the Delta, three in Middle and Upper Egypt. The function of the hierarchy was to keep public order, collect the taxes and administer justice.

All major decisions were taken by the viceroy and his cabinet, the *maiyya saniyya*, which literally means 'the vice-royal suite'.⁶ The *maiyya* did change its name at least once during the viceroy's reign, when it became the *shura al muawana* from 1833-44, then it returned to its previous nomenclature. The function of this organization was to see to the orderly functioning of internal affairs by promulgating vice-regal orders to the various officials, to prepare and present reports (*kushufat*) to the *wali*, and to act as the administrative channel that enabled the *wali* to govern effectively.⁷ It also acted as a disciplinary council to try officials accused of some misdeed, and to deal with correspondence with foreign powers and the Porte.

Mimaut has left us a description of these officials of the *maiyya*. He wrote:

Muhammad Ali has no offices ... his secretariat is composed of *effendiya* who all write in the palms of their hands, crouching on a divan ... It is true he is accurately informed not only about the general course of affairs, but about

everything that happens in the chancelleries of the Porte as well as in those of the diplomatic corps and sometimes with the most minute details.⁸

Deny gives details of how government officials were chosen with a careful regard to their degree of education, and were frequently sent back to school, so to speak, to fill any gaps in their education. Each functionary's name was inscribed on the page of a special dossier, with a formula specifying remedial exercises inserted beside the name. For example one man had, 'shall study Arabic (or Turkish or Persian as the case may be) daily, shall write ten (or twenty) lines and read for ten (or twenty) minutes the history of Naima (or Peter the Great or the epistolary art of Rifat), for so many days'.⁹ The dossier noted daily whether the official had done his homework or not, and he was frequently asked to present a written report on his progress every few days.

The maiyya saniyya was formed of two branches, the maiyya saniyya turki and the maiyya saniyya arabi. All communications written in Turkish were translated and transcribed into Arabic before they were sent out, and the same was done for any incoming material. According to a statute issued in 1818/1233, two principles dominated the entire administrative organization. The first, accentuating the deliberative and consultative nature of the administration, stated that (1) all matters must be examined in council and settled according to the majority of voices. The second principle, totally contradicting the first, stated (2) that all matters must come under the control of the viceroy who centralizes all matters.¹⁰ While the first principle was supposed to nurture a spirit of initiative and reasoning in the administration, the second was a reminder of the absolute authority of the *wali*. Such contradiction in the administration was born of the *wali*'s innate suspicion of the motives of everyone involved in the administration, and also out of a knowledge that his officials were not yet adept at administration and needed to be checked and guided. It was also, no doubt, a product of the *wali*'s own autocratic nature and military exactitude which developed the need to supervise every detail in person. Such attention to minutiae and excessive centralization kept the officials on their toes, but also resulted in an accumulation of papers and a tedious weighty bureaucracy that overwhelmed the diwans and the officials, and diminished efficiency.

In the face of such a powerful entity as the maiyya, safeguards were necessary to protect the functions of the rest of the administration from being engulfed or overwhelmed by it. An ordinance was issued setting forth the various functions of the diwans of the administration, and specifying that 'each functionary in his sphere has as much influence

(*nufudh*) as the benefactor [viceroy] in the whole of the public domain'.¹¹ These officials, who were called aide, assistant (*muawin*), were under the direct orders of a chief (*bash muawin*). Sami Bey held the position for ten years, from 1831-41, then he was succeeded by Husain Pasha, Raghib Pasha and Yusuf Kamil Pasha. *Muawin* was a title that was held on a variety of levels, from the army where it was a rank equal to that of a lieutenant-colonel, to the ministries of war, marine and public instruction where the number of *muawininun* varied.¹²

According to Deny, who is our main authority on the Egyptian administration and its procedures, the *majlis*, or assembly, corresponded to the tendency the *wali* had to use a deliberative system of administration. Thus the diwan al-khidiwi and the diwan of war were both doubled in a *majlis ali* in 1824-5/1240. This *majlis* lasted, under different names such as *majlis al-jihadiyya*, until around 1842-3/1258. The *majlis* was presided over by a *nazir*, had judicial attributions and disciplinary functions. In 1258 these functions were entrusted to the *haqqaniyya* or high court of justice.

The daily management of the state resided with the diwans. The most important of these was the diwan khidiwi, which dealt with the interior, except for finances. This diwan was a combination of various diwans that had formerly existed. By 1846 a number of bureaux depended on that diwan; these were the treasury, *awqaf*, real estate, expenses, accounting, census, payments, secondary affairs, quarantine, passports, post, law-suits and disputed claims, orders of the viceroy and the arabic bureau. All these bureaux had grown along with a need for them. From the outset the diwan had dealt with judicial matters, unless they had a religious or commercial bearing, in which case they were sent to the competent courts. Crimes of murder, theft, treason, defamation and other 'infamous acts' were sent to the diwan, where after due process, involving an inquiry, an account of which was sent to the *mudir*, the affair was charged in the diwan. The members of the diwan visited the prisons regularly to make sure that no prisoner had been illegally detained for more than ten days. According to a statute of 1837/1253, the diwans dealt with nineteen administrations among which were the *wali's* household provisions, cattle, the arsenal of Bulaq, the treasury, marble quarries, the Mahmudiyya canal, the mint, the post, and commerce with Europe. As an example of the cases the diwan dealt with, we have one on 25 Rabi Awal 1244/1828 where the *nazir* of the rice-producing areas of Rosetta said that the previous year he had had 467 workers who paid a *firda*, or tax on earnings, of 9,220 pts., but this year, the crop being less, he had only 319 workers who paid a *firda* of 6,309 pts. The governor of the area wanted the workers who were laid

off to pay the *firda*, which the *nazir* found unjust and appealed to the diwan for a decision. The diwan agreed with the *nazir* and ordered the governor to let the men who were out of work off the tax.¹³

Other diwans were those of the *kikhya* or *kathhoda*, who used to be the governor of the city of Cairo until the *wali* took over that function. Later on when the viceroy established residence for most of the year in Alexandria, the function of governor of Cairo was again entrusted to the *kikhya*. This diwan handled correspondence, and later on, the estates of the royal family, the *cafalik* and *uhad*.

The diwan al-taftish handled reports of inspectors in the entire country and issued decisions, circulars and regulations. Previously there had been a system of inspectors sent out to check on the administration of the provinces, who sent in their reports (*jurnalat*) to an office (*warsha*) in the capital. There were six such *wurash*, three for Lower Egypt, one for Cairo, and one each for Upper and Middle Egypt. In 1828/1244 the *wurash* and *jurnalat* changed and we have the diwan al-taftish, or inspectorate general, with the *kikhya* as the inspector general. The *jurnalat* or reports were constantly demanded by the *wali* who prized them as a means of keeping tabs on the administration, in the hope of nipping any errors in the bud. His maiyya, therefore, constantly clamoured for the reports and harassed the employees for them, if they were ever late. There were two kinds of reports, those which were sent on a monthly basis, in a regular fashion, and those which were sent on an *ad hoc* basis, i.e. independent studies and reports (*jurnalat mustaqila wa faniyya*), or reports of a technical nature.¹⁴ Among the most important of these reports were those emanating from the irrigation engineers. An order to the chief engineer of the governorate of Qaliub warned him that, 'Should you neglect for a second time to send in the reports as is usual ... I will send a Turkish *qawas*, who will no doubt cut off your head.'¹⁵ This passage reveals graphically the importance the *wali* placed on the *jurnalat*.

In 1837 the administration in general was once more re-formed, and other diwans were created bringing the total of diwans to seven: the diwan al-khidiwi, the treasury, which was divided into two sections for Upper and Lower Egypt; the diwan al-jihadiyya, the diwan of war; the diwan al-bahariyya, diwan of the navy; the diwan al-madaris, or public instruction; the diwan umur afranjiyya wa tijarat Misr, foreign affairs and commerce; and the diwan al-fabrikat, industry. Each diwan was divided into bureaux or *qalam*, and into *wurash*, or workshops. At the heads of the diwan was a *nazir*, although later the title changed to *mudir*. The officials who manned the diwans were recruited from the government schools and had to sit for an entrance examination. Once Eryp-

tians became employed in the administration the language of the bureaucracy gradually changed from Turkish into Arabic (by the end of the century Arabic had completely displaced Turkish in the administration). This took the Egyptianization of the country a step further. Once the *wali* sought to make Egypt independent from the Ottomans Egyptianization was inevitable, even though the elite remained Ottoman. This was to pose problems of identity among rulers and elite that we shall discuss later.

In Ottoman practice the chief financial officer in the country was the *defterdar*, who was traditionally appointed by the sultan. He supervised the *ruzname*, headed by a *ruznamji*, whose functions were to keep a record of the daily revenues and expenditures of the treasury and to compile monthly and yearly summaries of both revenues and expenditures. When in time the mamluk beys seized the post, placed their own men in it, and diverted the funds into their own pockets, the Ottomans reorganized the treasury and left the *defterdar* as the titular head, while the actual power was shifted to the *ruznamji*, who received no pay but held his position as a tax farm, and derived his revenues from the sale of offices. Under him he had the Coptic scribes, or *sarraf*. When the French occupied Egypt and all the Turkish officials fled, the head of the corporation of *sarraf*, Muallim Girgis, became the director of the treasury.¹⁶ Under Muhammad Ali the functions of the *defterdar* as the chief financial officer were reinstated, especially when Ibrahim was appointed to the post by the sultan after his return from Turkey in 1807 where he had been held hostage. Ibrahim held that post for six years.

As finances were a major problem in Egypt several attempts were made to reform the entire system, and to handle the several financial organisms that dated from Ottoman days. The first of these organisms, the *ruzname*, which came under the supervision of the *defterdar*, was by way of being a general administration of finances. The *ruznamji*'s function was to assess and collect the taxes, and to pay the expenses of the state.¹⁷ All the sums derived from the land tax, the *miri*, were paid into the *ruzname*, and allocations, or *muratabat*, were paid out. Under Muhammad Ali the *faiz* was paid out to the former *multazimun* from the *ruzname*. Muhammad Ali departed from customary usage and appointed his private secretary to supervise the tax registers and the assessment of taxes. That man was a Coptic *sarraf*, Muallim Ghali.¹⁸ Ghali had informed the *wali* of new means of taxing the population and enriching the treasury and had therefore been rewarded for his zeal by that appointment. His end was far from rewarding. When Muhammad Ali sought to impose a new tax on date palms, Ghali opposed the measure. Ibrahim Pasha, who by then was entrusted with the organiza-

tion and cadastre of Upper Egypt, received a letter from his father pointing out that the government had too much at stake in imposing the tax to listen to contrary opinions, and advised him to try and change Ghali's position against it. The viceroy added that he knew that Ibrahim would not succeed in convincing Ghali, but if he did then all the better, and if he did not then he was to cut Ghali's head off, 'so that the interests of the government may not be compromised through wrong ideas'.¹⁹ Ghali apparently continued to oppose the tax and was forward with Ibrahim, who summarily executed him. Ibrahim then took upon himself the support and education of all the deceased man's children, and they were given government positions and grants of land.

In due course the *ruzname* became part of the diwan khidiwi in 1837/1253, and by 1848/1265 it became incorporated into the diwan of finances.

The second financial centre was the *khazina*, or treasury, which had always formed part of the diwan al-wali in the past, and was part of the diwan al-khidiwi, when it became called qalam al-khazina al-khidiwiyya. The treasury controlled the accounts of the provinces, including the accounts of the Hijaz and the Sudan, and prepared monthly and yearly accounts of receipts and expenditures. A total accounting of the monthly and annual accounts was submitted to the viceroy at the beginning of every month and of the new year, and was then submitted to the *majlis*. In 1834-5/1250 the *khazina* lost some of its attributions to a parallel institution which was called diwan al-iradat. Three years later, in 1837/1253, the diwan al-iradat was divided into two diwans which were to handle the accounts of all revenues, other than agriculture, and the accounting of all the provinces, of Crete and the Sudan. The accounts deriving from agriculture went to the diwan al-tijara, while Syria had a separate accounting under a supervisor, a *mubashir*, Wasif Tiyab. This dual function of a diwan for Lower Egypt and Crete and one for Upper Egypt, the Hijaz and the Sudan was further handicapped by the fact that government expenditures were paid only after they had been approved by the diwan al-khidiwi, which would then authorize the *khazina* to disburse the funds, a process which added 'slowness and confusion' according to the Russian consul.²⁰ Taxes were collected by the *mudiriyyun* of the provinces and remitted to the diwan al-iradat. On the advice of a Frenchman, Rousset, who was hired for two years from the French ministry of finances to improve the condition of Egyptian finances, the diwan al-iradat, which did not give satisfaction, was finally abolished in 1844/1260. All government financial transactions were consolidated into one diwan al-maiyya al-misriyya, under the supervision of a *nazir*.²¹

All these reforms, or attempts at reform, were supposed to arrest malversation, fraud, and careless handling of government funds, much of which resulted from an archaic system of bookkeeping, which did not have double-entry procedures. These last were finally instituted by Ibrahim Pasha.

Along with the need for reform came a belated awareness that an efficient control of the countryside could not be imposed from the urban centres alone, but would have to include the collaboration of rural leaders as well, and not solely in their administrative capacity. In August 1829/1245 a council, *majlis al-shura*, was assembled. The *majlis*, the first of its kind, met under the presidency of Ibrahim Pasha, who referred to it as his 'parliament'. It was composed of 33 high officials, heads of diwans and departments, religious dignitaries, *muftis*, Shaikhs al-Bakri and al-Sadat, 24 *mamurun* of departments, and 100 *shuyukh al-balad*.²² The *majlis* may have resembled the traditional grand diwan, or even Napoleon's grand diwan, in some measure, but it differed markedly from either in its composition, for the majority of the members came from the lowest bureaucratic echelon, that of *shaikh al-balad*.

The reason for creating such a *majlis* ostensibly was that it was to advise the government on how to administer the country ('*al-nazar fi idarat shuun al-bilad*').²³ The Morean campaign had ended in a débâcle, and the government needed to raise funds from the population in order to finance its impending Syrian campaign. That turn of the financial screw had to be effected as peacefully as possible for the Egyptian government was planning to face the forces of the country's legal suzerain, the Ottomans, in Syria. One wrong step and the Egyptian regime could be faced with a local uprising in support of the Ottomans that could threaten the success of the campaign and even undermine their very position in Egypt. Moreover, with the impending campaign the government needed men for the army as well as funds, and so sought to achieve its aims peacefully and with the cooperation of the rural elite, which it thus brought into the *majlis*.

The *majlis* had no legislative powers; it was purely consultative, but it did pass a series of recommendations which were implemented and became standard procedures. There is little doubt that *Laihat ziraat al-fallah wa tadbir ahkam al-siyasa bi-qasd al-najah*, which appeared in Rajab 1245, four months after the *majlis* was constituted, was the brain child of that body. The *Laiha* was a manual on how to grow crops in the proper fashion, and how the different hierarchies were to conduct themselves in the rural milieu in order to achieve success or *najah*. The document was a mixture of how to improve agricultural practices along with rules of criminal and civil procedure. For example, if the beasts

belonging to an individual trampled and destroyed the crops of another person and the owner had deliberately allowed his beasts to enter that field, he was to be beaten with 50 lashes of the *kurbaj*, and was to pay damages to the owner of the field. If, however, the owner of the beasts was blameless and it was an accident, he was merely to pay damages without suffering corporal punishment. Should a shaikh or a fallah deliberately set fire to the barn or house or property of another, then if he had means restitution should be made, and he was to be sent to the penitentiary for a year, but if the arsonist were destitute he was to serve a life sentence in the penitentiary.²⁴

The majlis also decided that fallahin working on *corvée* duty should be used for only five months of the year, and during the important months were to work on the land, not on *corvée* duty.²⁵ They decided that *corvée* workers were to be relayed every week, and only factory workers were to be exempted from the *corvée*. Shaikhs and/or bureaucrats (*muwadhafun*) who were found guilty of misdeeds, such as taking a bribe, were to be sent to jail for six months. If they were found guilty of embezzlement from the government they were to be sent to the penitentiary for periods varying from six months to four years, depending on the amount stolen. Any *sarraḥ*, if found guilty of theft, was to be sent to jail for five years, unless he could reimburse the stolen sums, when he would be sent to jail for two years only. Should the thief or embezzler be employed in collecting the *miri*, he was to be executed as an example to others. Lesser shaikhs were to be beaten with 300 lashes of the *kurbaj*, and removed from office. High shaikhs were to be sent to the penitentiary.

Having set up an administrative, centralized bureaucracy, the *wali* tried to make sure that he could control it, and encouraged the population to complain to him personally against any abuse of authority. A series of ordinances was passed prescribing punishments to be meted to officials who transgressed against the population, who abused them, lied or cheated and stole from them.

Muhammad Ali and his administration were ethnically Turco-Circassian and Albanian, who despised the Egyptians and looked upon them as an inferior race of dirty peasants (*pis fallah*) created to work for the benefit of their masters, the rulers. The rulers equally realized that they would have to treat the subject race in a humane manner, if they were to extract from them what was needed without constant resort to force. At the same time the *wali* and his bureaucrats came to look upon Egypt possessively as 'their' property. A man may look upon his cow as a beast, but he will nonetheless treat it in a humane fashion if only to be able to milk it the better. The same attitude had developed among the

wali, his family and his retainers. Without Egypt they were nobodies, simple adventurers or mercenaries. With Egypt as a base, they were able to create an empire. A happy and fruitful Egypt was better than a sullen and starving one, for it would be more productive and easier to milk. A well-fed and contented cow yielded better milk than a starving one.

Muhammad Ali tried to instil some measure of balance in the manner in which his administrators treated the fallahin. He even went so far as to say, 'Egypt has two sovereigns, Sultan Mahmud and the fallah.' As his actions towards Mahmud had been neither those of a dutiful or even a subservient vassal, the administrators could be forgiven for assuming that the *wali*'s directives about treating the fallah decently were to be equally disregarded. But the *wali* was serious, and ordered that the fallahin were to appeal directly to the *mudir* when they were ill treated, and if that appeal failed they were to appeal directly to him. Throughout his many trips round the countryside, any fallah with a petition was allowed to present it. We can tell that such directives were taken seriously from the number of appeals that we have in the *sijillat*, and from the fact that complaints were investigated. For example, in 1237/1821 a man from a village, illegible in the dossier, sent a complaint to the governor of Buhaira province, stating that the village had been ruined as the result of a disastrous flood 'qaryatuna ashrafat ala-l kharab', and the villagers had asked the government official to help restore the village in return for *mal* on the harvest, but now the official had requested the *mal* twice from the same village. The governor investigated the complaint and determined that taxes were not to be collected twice from the same village. On another occasion a man from Minuf complained to the *wali* that the *agha* of the Delhis troops had seized fallahin for corvée labour on an area of land of 150 faddans which he had had planted half with *barsim* and half with cereals. The fallahin complained that because of the corvée they could not work their own land. The *wali* investigated the affair and sent the *agha* a reproachful letter saying, 'If [these allegations] be true we cannot allow it ... should you need *barsim* for your cavalry then the governor of the province is to supply it, so go to him for it, but do not obstruct government interests.'²⁶

A few years later the *wali* heard that some government officials, *nuzzar*, *kushaf* and *qaim maqams*, cavalry commanders and infantry commanders and soldiers all grew cereals and exploited (*mustaghilin*) the fallahin, sometimes sharing (*mushtarikin*) their crops with them. 'Such practices are contrary to military order, and must cease instantly',²⁷ the pasha warned in a circular. The year 1823 was a bad one for the fallahin, for a few days later the *wali* had occasion to reprimand the commander-

in-chief when he heard rumours that soldiers (*junud*) were lending money to village chiefs and *umad* ('yuqridun umad al-qura wa kibarihim') at usurious rates (*bi-l riba*). He ordered the commander-in-chief to investigate these rumours and to put an end to such goings on.²⁸

Complaints against government officials were plentiful and ranged from dual taxation, to abuse of authority, to taking bribes (*rashwa*). In one case the shaikhs of three *nawahi* presented a complaint against their immediate superior, the *nazir qism*. Bribery was abhorrent to the *wali* when practised by his officials, although he himself bribed Ottoman officials generously. Whenever any government official employed by the maiyya was convicted of accepting a bribe, he was sentenced to 1-3 years of hard labour. One such incident came to light in 1838/1254 when a sectional chief offered a bribe to a member of the maiyya. Muhammad Ali ordered an investigation and said, 'If someone raised in the diwans could stoop to such an act, then maybe other employees who are used to the give and take ('al akdh wa-l atta') [back scratching] will commit the same act.' The man was sentenced to hard labour for a year and an investigation was carried out in the bureaux to find out if any more employees had been guilty of such deeds.²⁹ One man who was found guilty of bribery in Syria was executed.³⁰

The government lent the fallahin money. Destitute villages, which had been ravaged by disasters of some kind, were lent funds to carry out their sowing. The money lent was ultimately deducted from the price of crops sold to the government at the end of the season.³¹ Lending the fallahin money arose out of dire necessity and out of a desire to see that no one other than the government exploited the fallahin. Local merchants knowing the fallahin's need for money lent it them at a high rate of interest that went up to as much as 25 per cent. Hitta recounts this as happening among the fruit growers. Grape growers would borrow money at 25 per cent and during the harvest season the grape merchants bought the grapes from the growers at a lower price than the market, cheating them in weight of fruit as well. When the fallah could not pay off all the money he had borrowed on the first crop, the remainder of the debt was added to the next sum he borrowed and charged 25 per cent further. In 1830 the government put a stop to such exploitation, which diverted funds to the merchants, and paid back to the growers the sums charged them by the merchants as rates of interest.³² Some merchants lent the fallahin money on the crops that lay in the fields, that is, bought the crop by anticipation at a cheap rate as a gamble. By 1838 such sharp dealings were stopped by the government, although the fallahin resorted to them clandestinely when they were short of funds.

Other than the merchants, money lenders among the natives and the

minorities lent the fallah money at usurious rates, and charged anything from 1 to 5 per cent per month.

Not only was the fallah exploited by the merchant and the money lender but also by the bedouin and the government official. The bedouin tribes had always abused and exploited the fallah. They imposed themselves on a village and levied protection money, or claimed a share in the agricultural production of the fallah on pain of destroying his crop or carrying off the livestock. The government attempted to stop that, and decreed that any bedouin claiming ownership of land should provide a written document proving his claim, a *rukhsa*, and pay the *mal* on it. Officials were ordered to inquire into ownership of the crop and if it was proven not to belong to the bedouin legally, or if he had not paid the *mal* on it, it was to be confiscated until the *mal* had been paid. All shaikhs in Middle Egypt where such abuses were prevalent, were warned that anyone who cheated, or illegally claimed any connection with a fallah, was to be punished.³³

The *wali* kept a strict eye on all affairs, but in spite of his vigilance he could not control all infractions. He tried to intimidate new appointees, as in the following letter he sent to Ghaitas Effendi, the *ruznamji*.

In spite of my ordering you to send reports about everything that is happening in the corners of the country, reports that are free of falsehood and deceit, so that I may be kept informed on all matters and right the wrong, and guide the way to the right path, it has reached my ears that Hasan Bey, *mudir* Qaliubiyya, has removed a number of his *nuzzar* and appointed others, and has imprisoned a *sarraf* and mentioned none of that in his report. A deficit of 30,000 pts has been shown in the books of a *sarraf* of a village in Minufiyya and the inspector of the provinces of Lower Egypt wrote that he obtained the sums from the *sarraf's* guarantor, but never registered any of that in his report. *Mudir* Daqahliyya wrote a letter scolding *muawin* Bahr, and never mentioned that in his report either. All these events have grieved and upset me, for after giving up all hopes of organizing this country, my hopes had revived with the new heads of divisions that I appointed ... If you are to follow the example of the above-named officials and not reveal the truth in your reports, and hide from me any part of events, you will in consequence have disdained public interest (*al-maslaha alamma*), for which we all work. And should you so disdain public interest it is imperative, legally and rationally, that you be ousted from public office.³⁴

Muhammad Ali was under no illusions as to the quality of his officials or his population for that matter. On 5 Shawwal 1247/1832 the *wali* learned that defeatist rumours were whispered about the performance of the army in Syria. He therefore wrote to Habib Effendi, the *mamur al-diwan*, saying,

The people of our circle and the inhabitants of Egypt fall into three categories. The first cares for nothing but his personal comforts, the second group, though people of high rank, because of their brutality think not [to distinguish] the bad and the good, the third group are by way of being animals (*fi hukm al-bahaim*) and think nothing of spreading idle talk for which they must be punished.

He ordered that spies be appointed to report on anyone found spreading defeatist rumours.³⁵

The first two categories that the *wali* described fitted his friends, and relations and the top ranks of the bureaucracy, while the third grouping, the *bahaim*, was applied to the native population. That attitude on the part of the *wali* explains why he treated the administration much like a school teacher treats a bunch of naughty school boys. He constantly bombarded them with threats and homilies as a means of keeping them on the right path, and tried to supervise the slightest details of work. He neither trusted his men nor respected most of them. He set one official to check the work of the other, and the reports that reached his ears were seldom favourable or reassuring. The registers abound in such reports, and in the consequent threats that poured on the administrators. For example the *kikhya* reported that Muallim Ghali, a Copt, was always saying that affairs were running smoothly and things were in good shape, when they were not. When asked for an accounting Ghali presented a *defter* which neither the *kikhya* nor the *defterdar*, Ibrahim Pasha, could decipher. The *kikhya* then commented, 'these infidels will never give up their traditional guile'.³⁶

Turkish *mudiriyyun* and Egyptian *nuzzar* fared no better. The *nazir* of Daqahliyya was warned that further laziness would earn him blows of the *nabut*. When he did not heed that warning another missive informed him that he would be beaten by the *nabut* until his waist was broken (*yiksar wistak*), a colloquial expression meaning beaten to within an inch of his life; even worse, the *nazir* was threatened with being broken back to the ranks of the fallahin, 'You pig (*khanzir*)', the letter ended. The *nazir*'s shortcomings lay in that he had not sent the cotton, rice or recruits that were demanded of him. Eventually the man was deposed without suffering any bodily harm. All the threats of bodily damage were supposed to put fear in the heart of the wrongdoers, but we seldom hear of punishments being meted to officials of the rank of *nazir* and above. The scapegoats were generally *umad* and *shuyukh al-balad*.

The *nazir qism al-Mahalla* and *Jafariyya* received a warning against the 'lies and falsification of his accounts'. He was also remiss in sending recruits and was warned that any further dereliction of duty on his part would be rewarded by death, as a punishment for him and a warning to others.

Egypt in the reign of Muhammad Ali

The *mudir* of Sharqiyya was ordered to inquire whether regions under his jurisdiction had delayed in paying their taxes, and if so then the *nazir* of the region should be beaten with 150 strokes of the *nabut*, the entire area turned into a *ciflik* and the village shaikhs sent to jail as a warning to others.³⁷ The *mamur* of Minya received a warning that he would be severely punished, along with the *nuzzar*, *hukkam* and shaikhs, if they did not carry out their functions properly.³⁸

Irrigation engineers were also closely supervised, for they held in their hands the power to turn the irrigation waters off or on, thereby watering some lands and leaving others dry. They were also in charge of the upkeep of dykes and dams, and woe betide any official if the dyke broke in his district. The chief engineer received frequent orders of the following variety:

We order you and your subordinates to make sure of the proper functioning of the irrigation system and to work diligently to protect and maintain the dykes and to see to it that the waters are not unnecessarily wasted. Should any dyke show a crack or a break, or be emptied of its waters, [the official in charge of the district] will merit execution.³⁹

The concept which the *wali* had of government was one which was summed up in a memorandum sent out from his diwan to the council, which laid out the responsibility of each link in the chain of command in the country, and which read like a manual written by a political theoretician describing the happy state. The memorandum said,

It is known from time back that those who die are succeeded by their children who, on reaching maturity, become capable of sowing and reaping and enter the work force automatically, and pay their taxes so that the land tax is little affected by reason of deaths. As to the matter of escapees, if the *mamurun* occupied themselves and punished the escapees and those responsible for their escape, even if they were from among the shaikhs, and transferred them from their areas to other areas, then escaping would diminish in time. Weak lands if given to affluent people and those who possess *faiz* would solve the problem [they would have the means to spend on the land and improve it]. Similarly the lands of those who are conscripted into the army and who leave behind no one to work the land should be divided little by little among those able to work [the land]. If the *nazir qism*, the *hakim al-khutt* and the shaikhs all united and were as one man working towards that goal, there is no doubt that that would induce prosperity in the land. Such a process would impose on those *hukkam* and shaikhs the necessity of setting in order tax registers, and financing (*tamwil*) villages every year, and making a comparison between the number of escapees and those who are deceased and the number of sons of either who have reached maturity, and between the number of those who have little money (*al-duafa*) and those who have means, and comparing the villages which are blighted because of their

distance from water with those which are healthy because of their proximity to water, so that those who have funds could pay the tax (*mal*) for those who have none, thereby effecting an equilibrium in government finances. When the hakim and *shaikh khutt* present their registers to *nazir qism*, the latter must go to the *mamur* and investigate the registers, check a village or two and put a seal to the registers every year. If every village is checked every year they can catch up with any deficits or moneys owed the state. It is clear that such prosperity and progress will be attained through building dykes and digging canals and good management. The *mamuriyya* of Qaliubiyya, while it was late in collecting the *mal* last year, because of its preoccupation with preparing the Sharqawiyya canal in Zifta and Qaliubiyya, knows at present the value of irrigation in the planting of maize (*dura*) and that the inhabitants of the canal banks are content and as though they had witnessed a new world and have applied themselves to agriculture.⁴⁰

The chain of command in the administration began with the lowest man in the hierarchy, the *shaikh al-balad* or *umda*. The title of *umda* was supposed by some historians to have appeared around 1850, while Barakat situated it earlier in 1843.⁴¹ References were made to an *umda* at least as early as 1823 in an ordinance sent to the commander-in-chief which refers to village heads and seniors (*umad al-qura wa kibaruha*). My feeling is that the term of *umda* was used for the more important shaikhs as heads of shaikhs (*umad al-mashayikh*), while lesser ones were referred to as *shuyukh*. Later on the two categories became used interchangeably. There are government dossiers of the period entitled *umad wa mashayikh* with little distinction being implied.

The *shaikh al-balad* or *umda* was frequently a hereditary function within a family, in that a member of the family succeeded to the former *umda*, although that member was not necessarily the former *umda*'s son.⁴² In some villages the position was frequently disputed amongst the leading families. In the eighteenth century the *umda* was the *multazim*'s man in the village. He collected the taxes on the *iltizam* from the fallahin. At the same time the shaikh was the village buffer against the *multazim*'s excessive rapacity, and on occasion was its mouthpiece to the authorities. Whatever his functions may have been, these same functions in the new regime took on an added importance when the government legalized them and entrusted the *umda* with distributing the taxes among the villagers in the same fashion as the guild elder did among the guild members, and in the same fashion as the shaikh had done during the *iltizam* system. Now the shaikh applied this function to the entire village and not merely to the *iltizam* under his control. The *umda* decreed which lands were uncultivated (*bur*), and exempted from taxation. He was entrusted with distributing the lands of the deceased or

escaped fallah, as in the past, for fallahin had fled their lands from time immemorial. The shaikhs were rendered responsible for chasing and catching the fleeing fallah, for public security, and above all were responsible for supplying conscripts for the army from 1820 onwards. This last function gave them tremendous power in the village, for they could pick the sons of their enemies and exempt the sons of their supporters, or they could be bribed to do one or the other. That was a major accusation frequently levelled against them by the villagers.

The second source of power for the shaikh was the fact that in return for his functions he was given land free of taxation, entitled *masmuh al-mashayikh wa masmuh al-masatib*, which had also existed in the eighteenth century but which was regranted to the shaikhs. That one source, added to whatever lands the shaikhs worked themselves or through hired labour, made them the single most affluent individuals in the village. Through that affluence the *umda* could lend money with interest, or in return for a land mortgage, and could finance the high-yield but expensive crops like rice, sugar or cotton. On the other hand, when taxation became a village responsibility the *umda* had to make good the lack of tax (*mal*) if the fallahin did not pay their share. The shaikh was also held responsible for any escaped fallah, or for harbouring any escapees. More often than not the *umad* urged the fallahin who were in arrears of taxation to flee the village, so that they could take over the lands of the escapees themselves, probably calculating that if they were going to be forced to make up the difference in tax themselves they might as well benefit by planting the land and directly controlling it as well. Sometimes shaikhs conveniently forgot to register fallahin who had died, and so worked their land instead of redistributing it among the fallahin as was customary.⁴³

It is therefore not surprising to find *umad* and shaikhs as well as bedouin among the first *mutaahidun*, and it was not uncommon to see the domination of whole districts by certain families. The family of al-Shawarbi in Qaliub, for instance, held three out of the five positions of *umda* in the region. In Gharbiyya, five members of the Salim family were *umad*. The leading *umad* of that time became the leading landowning families in Egypt in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which was certainly no coincidence. Some were families of bedouin tribal chiefs who had become sedentarized and some were local gentry or *ayan* as they were called, like the Sultan, Shawarbi, Abu Stait, Abaza, al-Zumur, Badrawi Ashur, al-Fiqi, Sharif, Lamlum, Foda, etc.

The hierarchical superior of the *umda* or shaikh, the *shaikh al-khutt*, or section head, informed the shaikhs of their divisions, or districts (*nahiya*), of the quota of crops required by the government, and

supervised the gathering of the crops all over the district. The local shaiyks remitted the taxes they had gathered to the *khutt* officials who handed them over to the district treasurer. His supervisor was a *nazir qism*, department chief, who in turn reported to the *mamur*, whose superior was the provincial governor, the *mudir*. The *mudir* was ultimately responsible for the entire governorate, and received his orders directly from the capital. The *mudir* was always a Turco-Circassian, while the lesser ranks were filled by fallah Egyptians. By the late 1820s the rank of *mamur* was filled by Egyptians. Consul Salt believed that the French consul Drovetti was responsible for 'persuading' the *wali* to adopt what Salt called 'a dangerous innovation', which was 'not to employ any Turkish *kashif* or *qaim-maqam* in villages' but to replace them by 'Arab sheikhs – in fact to make his rule depend entirely on the Arabs', by which Salt meant Egyptians.⁴⁴ Why Egyptians should have been 'dangerous' but Turks not, Salt did not explain. Presumably he believed the Egyptians to be totally inept at collecting taxes, while the Turks, who used brutal methods, were not.

There was a rumour that Muhammad Ali had chosen to use Egyptians to collect taxes because the *umad* could gouge more money out of the fallahin, and could control them better as they came from the same milieu and were therefore familiar with all the wiles that could be used. Another, simpler reason may have been that there were not enough Turco-Circassians in the country to man the administration; and much as the *wali* had needed Egyptians to man his army he needed them to swell the ranks of his administration. The *nazir qism* replaced the old position of the *kashif*, and the *mamur* and *mudir* replaced the mamluk beys in their administrative functions, so that the new chain of command bore some resemblance to the old one, but was much tighter. The major difference between the old mamluk system and the new centralized one was that the governors had become government employees, rather than semi-autonomous *iqta* or *iltizam* holders, who were closely supervised by the *wali* and at his mercy to maintain or oust. The old mamluk beys had had no real hierarchy save the vague one of 'households', a loose one at best, and an authority that was diffused and divided. The new administration was an example of the more centralized state formation that was being implanted in Egypt.

The Egyptian countryside therefore underwent improvements as well as disasters. The improvements were noticeable in the system of irrigation which increased the crop area and the number of crops per year. That increase was unmatched in magnitude by any achieved by succeeding regimes. At the same time the canals demanded a work force that put a strain on the population and dislocated whole rural communi-

ties: while the public works were in progress the workers were followed by their women and children to the site of the canal. If the workers had no family left behind to till their lands, the land was either taken over by someone else or the crops suffered. Basin irrigation had put a lesser burden on the fallah, who worked roughly 150 days of the year on the soil and who could turn to cottage industries to supplement his income during the summer months. With perennial irrigation he worked more frequently, and, although the maximum number of days was no more than 250 out of the year, that was nonetheless a massive increase of his working days, especially if one added *corvée* duty to it. Any improvements to the land were met by higher taxation, as well as presumably a higher rate of profit to the fallah. These taxes, though onerous, did not lead to the depopulation of villages as some eye-witness accounts would have us believe. Fallahin who were in arrears of taxation had always fled their villages, as Sultan Selim noted when he occupied Egypt in 1516. It was not a new phenomenon brought on by Muhammad Ali's tyranny. When one fallah fled his village he went to another village where he settled and started a new life, and his place in the old village was taken by someone else. The result was more akin to a game of musical chairs than to depopulation. It is true that whole villages were deserted, but only as a consequence of a high flood, when the village would move to a higher ground (a *tall*), or after an epidemic – of which there were all too many. Such epidemics did wipe out whole villages. No villages were permanently depopulated through tax arrears, although the inhabitants may have hidden out for a while, because fallahin who fled their lands were, if caught, forcibly returned to their village within fifteen days. The same was true during the *iltizam* system. Should the escaping fallahin be found labouring on other land, then they were to be returned to the village of origin after the harvest. Spies who reported escaping fallahin were given 100 pts. reward, and any *nazir khutt* in whose district an escapee worked was punished by 100 strokes of the *nabut*, because his connivance was presumed. Village shaikhs were ordered to report the names of fleeing fallahin; these names were then checked in *daftar tarabi al-misaha* to make sure that they belonged to the village, and, if found, the fallahin were returned to the land.⁴⁵ Clearly, some fallahin escaped detection, while others did not. Fallahin who escaped the land permanently sometimes sought refuge in foreign lands, as did the 6,000 fallahin who fled to Acre, and gave the *wali* his excuse for invading that territory.

From 1800 to 1844 there were several epidemics of cholera and bubonic plague. There were also famines in consequence of Nile floods being either too high or too low. During one of the worst of these

epidemics, in 1834-5, it was estimated that half-a-million people perished, that is, nearly one fifth the total population. That factor caused the decimation of whole villages. The same happened in this century with the outbreak of malaria and cholera epidemics.

The population of Egypt had been declining in numbers from the middle ages. That trend was arrested under Muhammad Ali. In spite of plagues, famines and five major wars, the population rose from 3,854,000 in 1800 to 4,304,000, perhaps even 5,000,000, in 1840,⁴⁶ because of public security more than for any other reason. The increase in population did not keep up with the demands for labour, and manpower shortage remained a perennial problem, especially at times where men were drafted into the army or navy, into corvée gangs for public-works projects, or to work on a princely estate. Administrative changes were instituted to alleviate that shortage. Where a village was found to have more land than the population could till, that land was removed from the *zimam* of the village and forcibly distributed to those of a neighbouring village or to those among the original village who had money and could take on the burden of more land, so that no land would be left fallow.⁴⁷ On the other hand, villages which were so vast that the fallah wasted time going to and from the fields were allowed to build new hamlets (*kafr*) closer to the fields. Large latifundia (*ibadiyyat*) which needed manpower were sent landless fallahin from other villages; five men per hundred faddans were assigned to the Said and eight men per hundred faddans in the Delta, since more men were necessary on lands which grew summer crops as in the latter. These men worked for a share of the harvest or for a daily wage, and were exempted from corvée labour,⁴⁸ which explains why the fallahin preferred to work on *ibadiyyat*. Rice-growing areas, such as Buhaira, Gharbiyya, and Daqah-liyya, were at first exempted from military service so as to encourage rice production, but when the need for military men outweighed the demands for rice production, they were subject to conscription like everywhere else.

The wages of the landless fallah, or the fallah who hired himself out as a part-time labourer, either because his land was too small to support him and his family or because in certain years the flood had cut off his land, differed depending on the work itself. In 1840 on royal *cafalik* the men were given 30 paras, the youths 15 paras and children 10 paras a day. The wages were paid weekly half in cash and half in kind. The highest wages were allegedly paid on Ibrahim Pasha's *cafalik*, where the men received 1 pt. or 40 paras per day.⁴⁹ According to al-Hitta, the living expenses of the highest-paid fallah came to half his daily wage, so the wages were sufficient to defray his expenses.⁵⁰ The fallah, however,

was not employed the year round, even on lands with perennial irrigation. Wages were sometimes not paid the fallah, who was coerced into corvée labour unjustly on the estates of the notables. This, however, was strictly illegal. An order was sent from the *wali* to all the governors and government officials never to use the fallahin as labourers on their lands without paying them a wage, which meant that corvée for any labour other than public works was strictly forbidden. In fact the law stipulated that if anyone was caught using fallahin in corvée labour on his lands he was to pay the fallahin twice the normal wage in punishment.⁵¹

One can wonder why, if the wages of the fallah had improved, at least on paper, and his agricultural output had increased, some fallahin continued to flee the land and others to maim themselves. Those who fled did so as individuals for a number of reasons, mostly having to do with failing to pay their taxes. The land law of 1847 had specified that when these individuals in course of time returned to their lands, they were entitled to regain their lands, even if in the interim, the lands had been redistributed, on condition that the escapee repaid the land tax. It is interesting to note that Said's law of 1854 limited the fallah's right to return to the land to a fifteen-year absence, whereas Muhammad Ali's law had specified no time limit whatsoever. The later law also mentioned that the returning fallah should be given land, but did not specify that it be the fallah's original soil.⁵² On the other hand, those who maimed themselves did so to escape conscription into the army. Conscription was the bane of the country, for it not only endangered men's lives, or maimed them seriously, but it also took them away from their lands. If there were no other males in the family to replace the conscripted fallah, the fallah's lands were then given away to someone else. Even if the land was tilled in the man's absence by his closest male relatives, when he returned he often had a struggle to recover it.

Another difference in the fallah's life under Muhammad Ali stemmed from the regimentation that was imposed on him. He was told what to plant by the bureaucracy, when and how to plant it. The fallah, from being a relatively free individual in his work habits although in little else, found himself regimented, pushed and prodded by the state. In the process his agricultural practices no doubt improved and the crop production increased, but his personal freedom was infringed in many new ways. Under the mamluks the fallah had also been coerced – to deliver up more of his surplus, to give corvée labour on public works and on the *multazim*'s land; he had been forced to return to the land when he fled from it, and was treated 'like a slave', as Jabarti pointed out. However, he grew whatever crops he wanted, worked half the year,

or else busied himself with cottage industries or as a wage labourer on someone else's land. Under Muhammad Ali the fallah worked longer in areas of perennial irrigation, and suffered a more stringent *corvée* because of the extensive public works. He was also liable to conscription in the army.

The new crops introduced into the country and the expansion of cash crops, sugar, rice, cotton, demanded a doubling or tripling of manpower so that the fallah had less time for cottage industry, which he was frequently not allowed to pursue, for weaving and other trades were forbidden save in government factories. Where the fallah had lived a subsistence economy in the past, he was now making more in terms of surplus but was also giving more of his labour. Sometimes the fallah made money when prices rose, but there was no linear progression in prices: there were ups and downs, depending on natural factors and on other factors such as need for *corvée* or conscription, which varied according to the demands of the government.

When we compare the price of foodstuffs over a span of thirty years we note that, whereas in 1812 the *ardab* of wheat sold internally for 5.75 pts., it increased to 29 pts. in 1820-5 and rose to 40 pts. in 1840.⁵³ That showed an increase in price of 595 per cent over 28 years. These were years when a strict price tariff was imposed until 1830, so that prices were kept artificially low to prevent internal turmoil. At the same time with the rise in price we can assume that, although the fallah did not sell his wheat at that price but a much lower one, to account for the profit to the government and to the seller, yet in absolute terms he made a profit that was 595 per cent higher than in previous years. The fallah did not eat wheat; he sold it and ate *dura*, maize, or millet. Meanwhile, the fallah's taxes had risen from a high of 11 riyals or 24.75 pts. in the Delta and 20 riyals or 45 pts. in the Said imposed on the best lands to a high of 67.5 pts. in 1824 when money was in short supply and the war in the Morea beginning. In 1839 a surtax of 5 per cent was added and in 1844 taxes were further raised by 12.5 per cent, bringing the highest land tax up to 80 pts.⁵⁴ In short, while the taxes on the very best land increased by about 223 per cent in the Delta and 77 per cent in the Said, the profit from one crop, wheat, had increased by 595 per cent. On the other hand, not all crops progressed in the same fashion. Cotton, which was sold at 15.5 riyals in 1825, fell to 10 riyals in 1842 and to 7.75 in 1843.⁵⁵ In between these years the price of cotton rose.

On the positive side we can say that the fallahin benefited from a greater degree of internal security than in mamluk days, but they were also exploited and alienated from the land, which became the property

of the elite, so that by the end of the forties many fallahin had lost their land to the new estates.

In a society which was undergoing economic changes, as Egypt was, the majority of the producers put in more work for less benefits. Whatever surplus was accumulated by the government was partly ploughed back into land, but was also diverted into other investments: industry, the army, etc. These investments were presumably to benefit a later generation, but did not benefit the fallah entirely. Even when the fallah's money wages rose, the result to him remained negative in terms of affective response. Women suffered most from such socio-economic changes. The family, which had been a self-sufficient unit of production in which each member contributed a share, was now displaced in favour of state-controlled production. Fallah women could no longer contribute to the family income when cottage industries became state controlled and regulated. As their productive abilities were diminished, they lost much of their leverage within the family unit, becoming more dependent on their males. Moreover, since land was not privately owned, females did not inherit land as it was not divided according to the *sharia* but simply went to the sons. There are, however, cases of women appealing to the *wali* to inherit land and he agreeing on condition that they paid the taxes in advance. Further dislocation in the family unit occurred when men went out on corvée duty or were conscripted. Women were forced to accompany their men when they had no other means of survival or were unable to depend on the extended family. Often these women worked alongside their men on corvée duties.⁵⁶

The fallah's response to government exploitation was similar to that in all peasant societies. He sought short-term migration, resorted to social banditry or to outright rebellion as means of active resistance. When the fallah feared to rebel because of the coercive power of the state, he resorted to passive resistance, seeking to improve his condition through cheating the landlord, pilfering some of the crops, slowing down work, sabotaging crops. Passive resistance was more widespread than organized acts of violence, the reason being that a peasant in general seeks to minimize the risk of disaster rather than to maximize his average return, and his final test is 'what is left to him' not 'what is taken' by the state.⁵⁷

In its search for law and order, the administration had to face three major issues and try to resolve them: the first was the issue of the bedouin, the second was the army and the consequences of conscripting the fallahin, and the third was the issue of revolts or uprisings.

Bedouin tribes had roamed the land at will, going from parts west of

the Sahara to the western provinces of Fayyum, Buhaira, Minufiyya and Giza. Some of these tribes had long been sedentarized and had become major *multazimun* in the area, while others were semi-sedentarized, frequently using the fallahin as their labourers, or simply living off their produce. Still others were nomadic and roamed at will, taking what they pleased from the fallahin, and making a living from guiding caravans across the desert and collecting protection dues. The problem facing the Egyptian administration was how to cope with these groups. Those tribes who made a living from guiding caravans were coopted into the system and paid handsomely for their services in order to restore the flow of commerce. Especially was this the case with the routes going to and from the Red Sea, either via Suez or Qusair, the Sudan trade, and trade with North Africa and with Syria.

Those tribes who were completely sedentarized were given land either as *masmuh al-mashayikh* or as *masmuh al-urban* and thus turned into local rural gentry. Among such local sedentarized groups we have the examples of three well-known families, who are renowned to the present day. These are the families of the Abaza of Awlad Aid in Sharqiyya, the Shawarbi family in Qaliubiyya, and the Shiraii family of Sammalut, in Minia. All these families had been settled before the advent of Muhammad Ali. Mubarak describes some of them as having been 'fi khushunat al-Arab', 'as rough as the Arabs', in their dealings with the other Arab tribes, which may well have been in self-defence, for as sedentarized tribes they would become fair game for the nomadic ones. When the *wali* gave them the option of being treated as nomadic Arabs, and thereby forgoing their lands, properties and date-palm groves, or being treated as fallahin, that is taxed, they opted for the latter treatment, and undertook to pay taxes as the fallahin did, although they were allowed to retain possession of their lands. Family tradition has it that the Abaza branch of the Aid tribe had derived its name from a Circassian grandmother, who was so beloved and respected by her husband and her sons that they gave the family her name, or rather, the name of her place of origin. There may be some truth in the legend, for the Abazas remain notoriously blonde and pink-cheeked, a living proof of continued Circassian and Turkish intermarriage. A long period of sedentarization must have occurred to permit the tribal chief a marriage outside the tribe. Some of the family members became village shaikhs and two, Shaikh Hasan Abaza and his brother Shaikh Baghdadi, sat on the *majlis* created by Ibrahim Pasha in 1829.⁵⁸ Hasan served in higher positions than that of village shaikh, for he became *nazir*, then *mamur*, then *bash muawin* of the provinces of Sharqiyya and Daqahliyya. Mubarak described him as 'planting 4,000 faddans' ('wa kana yazrau

nahwa 4,000 faddan').⁵⁹ His son, Al-Sayyid Abaza, had an *uhda* of 20 villages and was eventually made a pasha.

In a minor way the Abaza family seemed much like the tribe of the Hawwara at the time of Shaikh Hummam, who was nicknamed Amir al-Said. Hummam grew sugar-cane, cereals, and had slaves and mamluks both white and black. He controlled the whole of Upper Egypt until Ali Bey sent an army of 3,000 men against him in 1769. The rest of the Hawwara who had not been finished off by Ali Bey were destroyed or coopted by Ibrahim Pasha. The two tribes resembled each other in their authority and affluence, but there the similarity ends, for while the Hawwara were scattered the Abaza flourished.

Other tribes who were not as sedentarized were induced to leave their nomadic way of life by grants of land, and were also coopted into the army as cavalry irregulars. The Aid, the Harbi, the Hanadi, and the Jawazi accompanied Ismail on his campaign to the Sudan.⁶⁰ If the tribe did not cooperate, its horses were confiscated for the army, for the bedouin were often horse breeders, and they were forced to sedentarize for economic reasons. Late-comers to the region, like the Awlad Ali of the Western Desert, were settled in the province of Buhaira and Fayyum, while the Jawazi settled in Middle Egypt.

The process of sedentarization did not take place overnight. Nomadic tribes exist to the present day, while the descendants of Awlad Ali continue to claim dual nationality today, Egyptian and Libyan, showing that their origins were never forgotten. The bulk of sedentarization, however, did happen under Muhammad Ali and for sound economic reasons.

When the bedouin could no longer make a living by attacking the fallahin or levying protection fees on villages or on caravans, they had to turn to other means of livelihood. When the tribal chiefs saw that money was to be had from agriculture, the natural process of settlement took place. Agriculture on a subsistence level was no inducement to settle, but agriculture for sale or for export was, as Shaikh Hummam had discovered. The tribal chiefs soon became rich gentry and the rest of the tribe was turned into fallahin, a natural process in most of the areas where the tribes settled, whether in Egypt or elsewhere in the Arab world. The government, which needed manpower to till the soil, treated the bedouin differently from the other fallahin, for instance they did not have to perform corvée duties, although Mubarak claimed that the Aid did. Conscription did not bother the bedouin either because from time immemorial they had been the irregulars in the armies and continued to perform the same tasks under Muhammad Ali.

The land grants given the bedouin by the *wali* were of three kinds.

The first kind was supposedly granted and taxed at half the *kharaj* tax. We know little about that kind of land grant save for one reference.⁶¹ The second kind of land grant was exempted from taxation on condition that the bedouin tilled the soil themselves. Traditionally the bedouin scorned the tillers of the soil, whom they had fleeced, and felt it demeaning to turn into fallahin. Instead they hired the fallahin to work for them as sharecroppers, or rented the land out to them. Since the *raison d'être* of the land grants was to turn a new population into fallahin and so increase the agricultural manpower, the government tried to end that practice, and to force the bedouin to till the land themselves or forfeit it. Some of the more enterprising bedouin simply laid claim to a share of the agricultural output of the fallah, but without sharing any of his tax liabilities. The government ordered an investigation into similar bedouin activities and ordered that the bedouin who laid claim to any land should be given a permit (*rukhsa*) and made to pay the *mal* in cash (*al-mal naqdan*).⁶² The third kind of land grant was in the form of an *ibadiyya*. These were distributed in varying quantities, from whole villages granted to important tribal chiefs, to areas of 100 to 150 to 200 faddans for lesser men.⁶³

Because the bedouin were also shepherds and the wool from their sheep was necessary for the cloth industry, they were treated as valuable members of the community. They were also livestock breeders, especially of horses and camels, which were indispensable for the army. Frequently the bedouin would drive their flocks to graze in the fields of the fallahin, thereby ruining the crops. Swift punishment was meted out for such acts, and they were ordered to pay double the price of the crops they had ruined.⁶⁴ In time the bedouin learnt to leave the fallahin alone and to cooperate with the government.

The sedentarization of the bedouin was the by-product of an expansion of state power at the expense of the tribe. Tribal leadership was incorporated into the wider government system, and the shaikhs drawn into government cooperation so that their position in the tribe was compromised. Since the government was better armed and had powers of coercion, it could impose its will and its laws on the tribe and override tribal authority. Lastly, by putting an end to tribal protection over villages and dismantling the traditional economic resources of the tribe, the government presented the tribes with no alternative but to submit or move out. In most cases they submitted.

A second source of problems to the government was the army (see chapter 9). In the past the army had been formed of mamluks or mercenaries, a new departure introduced by Ali Bey al-Kabir. With the advent of Muhammad Ali the army was formed of Albanian troops,

some Turkish troops and mamluks who had joined the new administration. New recruits were brought in from Turkey or were bought from the Ottoman empire. There were also Maghribis or North Africans, mostly Tunisians and Algerians, and bedouin auxiliaries. All the soldiers obeyed their own superiors, and fought in their own style, using whatever weaponry they had at their disposal. There was thus no unified command, let alone unified weaponry and ammunition. During the Hijaz campaign Tussun had complained that the Maghribis did not have one leader but eleven, all disagreeing with each other.⁶⁵ While in the past the system had worked well enough, although it was not efficient and Ali Bey had tried to reform it, at present the system showed its shortcomings. Moreover the army in Egypt was unruly and apt to demand its pay at the most inopportune moments, that is when the treasury was out of funds, and to go on rampage when it had not been paid, which was fairly frequently. The pay of the troops was given to them through their officers; that is, the commander of a troop was given the funds by the treasury and he disbursed them at will. Loyalty was therefore to that commander and not to the state or the *wali*. Discipline was lax, and troops could opt out of battle if they so desired, and there was little their commanding officers could do about it. In brief, the army was an organization of mercenaries, and behaved as such.

Muhammad Ali and his generals had seen British and French troops in action and were impressed by their martial arts. Alfi Bey had converted his forces into European-style troops and Muhammad Ali had been unable to defeat him and his men. All these events led unmistakably in the direction of converting the army into the European style of troops. It was certainly not a novel idea with the *wali*, for Sultan Selim III had lost his throne for trying to do the same thing with the janissaries.

In 1815 some three to four hundred soldiers returning from the Hijaz war had looted shops, stores and houses in Cairo. That was the excuse the *wali* needed to try to replace the Albanians by a disciplined, modernized army. That year the *wali* ordered the creation of a new army, the *nizam jadid*. The troops did not take kindly to having their traditional system changed so radically and, turning against the viceroy, they tried to assassinate him. It was only the timely warning of a fellow Albanian, Abdin Bey, the brother of Hasan Pasha, that allowed him time to escape in secret from his house. This act of treachery on the part of his men more than ever decided Muhammad Ali on finding a new source for his model army. The Ottomans by then were making it difficult for him to recruit men in Turkey, and had placed an embargo on sending any mamluks to Egypt. The new source was to be slave

soldiers from the Sudan, which was one leading reason for undertaking its conquest. As Muhammad Ali wrote to his son Ismail, who was taxing the newly conquered Sudanese areas too harshly, 'We are not there for money, but for slaves', and ordered that he tax them moderately.⁶⁶

Some of the regiments from the Sudan did become part of the Egyptian army, but the attempt to recruit a slave army failed for a number of reasons. It was then that the idea of an army of Egyptian fallahin was suggested to Muhammad Ali. At first the *wali* was offended at the idea of an army of fallahin. In 1814 he had even given strict orders, when recruiting Maghribi troops in the army, not to take any fallah who might insinuate himself (*yandass*) amongst the Maghribis.⁶⁷ Necessity finally overcame his initial aversion and Egyptians were drafted into the army. To begin with these Egyptians were recruited in small numbers, to help out the main army in the Sudan. It seemed that the heat of the Sudan was too much for the Albanians who suffered sunstroke and heat prostration, so the *wali* ordered 4,000 Egyptians sent out in their place,⁶⁸ but later on the bulk of the army was formed of fallahin.

The first nucleus of the *nizam jadid*, as the new regiments were called, was composed of former mamluks and some slaves from the Sudan. These were trained by a Frenchman, the famous 'colonel' Sève, in Aswan in preparation for the coming Morean campaign. Sève, who in the French army had never risen beyond the rank of corporal, and who had been cashiered for insubordination, although he was pardoned and went back to the army, claimed to be a colonel in Egypt. His life before Egypt shows him an adventurer of the first order. He had become involved in a plot to liberate Marshal Ney from prison, and when the plot had failed he fled France. He landed in Egypt in search of a job, as many of his compatriots had done, and to bolster his chances of being hired he posed as an officer of the imperial army. When he applied for a position, the *wali* decided to use him to train his new army in Aswan.

At first Sève had a hard time winning the trust and the respect of the men, for they could not speak his language nor he theirs, and they despised him as a Frenchman and a non-Muslim. Even more they were disgruntled at having to learn a new method of warfare in which they did not see much value. When target practice came round, more rifles were aimed at Sève than at the target. Fortunately for the man, the soldiers' aim was bad, but Sève's courage in standing up to the men won their admiration and they accepted his teaching.

The regiments were organized along French lines, with initially six regiments, each composed of five battalions, the battalion being formed of eight companies of fusiliers. When Sève went off to the Morea with

Ibrahim Pasha, General Boyer took over the task of training the army. Muhammad Ali kept a close watch on the new army in training. When he was informed that the men's aim was bad, he ordered all the recruits to recite 'Al-Fatiha', the first *sura* of the Quran, in order to gain *baraka*, before they started target practice. He was certain that would improve their aim.⁶⁹

The need to recruit Egyptians into the army showed a further development towards the modern state in creating an indigenous army that was to displace the traditional mercenary or mamluk armies. The army, which became an instrument of unification, was also an instrument of defence against invasion, but in addition it became a means of carrying out imperial designs. An army of 18,000 to 20,000 was enough to defend the land, as under the mamluks, but an army of over 100,000 was clearly formed with imperial intent, and grew along with the desire for expansion.

The first native recruits were told that their duration of service was three years, when they would be allowed to visit their homes and dispensed from any financial charges, but would be considered soldiers for the rest of their lives. This was along the lines of the Ottoman regiments. The Egyptians, who were unused to the military life, did not think much of these terms, and did not want to become recruited into the army. The army was an unknown factor, and feared. They ran away to avoid conscription or hid themselves. When the first batch had seen battle and returned to tell their tales to their countrymen, probably more men sought to avoid conscription. The recruiters then resorted to violent means to catch the fallahin, but the *wali* was appalled by such means and counselled moderation. He sent an order to Ibrahim Pasha warning him to stop using brutal methods for recruitment ('*al-kaff an asalib al-unf*') and to attempt to recruit men by persuading them of the value of a soldier's life.⁷⁰ He wrote that it was inevitable that recruitment should be disagreeable to the fallah, even though it was carried out for the triumph of Islam, and it is from that point of view that it should be put to the fallah, through the village ulama and preachers, who should also point out that when the French had occupied Egypt the Copts had responded to the appeal of their co-religionaries and had joined their army.

Attempts at using the ulama as a means of public relations, or for propaganda for the army, resulted among other things in a tract written by an alim from the Azhar, Shaikh Khalil Ibn Ahmad al-Rajabi, at the instigation of Shaikh al-Arusi, his mentor at the university. The work was composed of seven chapters and entitled, *The History of Muhammad Ali*. The last chapter of the work was written in praise of

conscription. It quoted the Quran and the Prophet that the soldier who dies in battle goes to paradise.⁷¹ Such arguments convinced few among the recruits or the rest of the fallahin.

In the early days the recruits returned home after three years armed with a stamped certificate (*tadhkara makhtuma*) which would exempt them from further service.⁷² Later on, when demands for men exceeded the supply of recruits, neither the length of service nor the certificate was respected.

The military advisors who had convinced the *wali* to recruit an army of fallahin were the Frenchmen in his service. The methods of recruitment that were used were those that had been applied in France before and after Napoleon by the *racoleurs*, who received a fee for every man they dragooned into the army. Those recruits who tried to escape the army were chased and forcibly dragged back. The punishments inflicted on these 'soldiers' were 'the branding iron, convict ships or death ... for the slightest mistakes'. Napoleon's need for fighting men had rendered the system even more brutal so that men who avoided the army were punished and all those who were related to them as well, 'his father, mother, brothers, sisters and brothers in law, his entire family; all those at whose house when worn out by hunger, cold and misery, the unhappy man had drunk, eaten, worked or slept; later on the punishment was extended to the entire commune'.⁷³

That system was adopted in Egypt as the need for men became acute. Orders were issued punishing the family of the recruit who had escaped and taking in his place another member of his family or, if none was available, then another member of his village, punishing the *umda* who allowed him to get away, and the person who had given him shelter. When escape from the army became harder for the fallahin, some of them took to maiming themselves by putting rat's bane in their eyes, drawing out the front teeth so they could not bite the bullet, cutting off the first joint of the index finger so they could not pull the trigger, or blowing off a toe so they could not march. These acts, in turn, were punished by the administration with sentences ranging from imprisonment, to lashes with the *kurbaj*, to death.

The campaign in Syria put further pressures on the population, and *nuzzar aqsam* were threatened with having their heads cut off if they did not send recruits immediately.⁷⁴ Some shaikhs resorted to desperate measures, like shanghaiing boatmen and sending them off as recruits from their village. Orders were circulated commanding punishment for such actions by taking the shaikh's son or, if no son, then his brother, and if he had none then any other male relative; if he were totally devoid of relatives then he himself was to be taken in place of a recruit.

Those among the soldiery who were married did not pay the *firda* tax, but as they could not cultivate their *athariyya* lands, orders were given to distribute that land among their relatives and neighbours so the land would not lie fallow.⁷⁵ That may have been another major reason for the reluctance of the fallah to join the army, and in some cases it led to the destitution of the soldier's immediate family. Generally soldiers were not allowed to marry unless they were well behaved, when marriage was held as an inducement to good conduct.⁷⁶

Coptic soldiers were also recruited into the army, and orders respecting those among them who worked in the shipyards in Alexandria were issued exempting them from paying both the *firda* and the *jizya*, or poll tax.⁷⁷

The *wali* kept a strict eye on the army. When he heard that some officers did not follow lines of organization in the regiments and battalions, he sent orders to the minister of war and to all the officers in the army, warning them that those who allowed themselves the slightest departure from established practice were to be instantly punished.⁷⁸ Only the literate among the rank and file were promoted to the higher ranks, but Egyptians were never promoted beyond the rank of first or second lieutenant. Muhammad Ali was most disturbed when he heard that Ibrahim wanted to promote two of his dead brother's mamluks to the rank of colonel (*miralay*), and pointed out that those who were superior to their fellow officers in matters of reading and writing should be promoted.⁷⁹ In some odd fashion the *wali* assumed that literate officers were necessarily superior officers, while Ibrahim, who was closer to the men, assumed that brave officers and leaders were not necessarily the most literate among them.

How officers were appointed was later to cause friction between father and son. Muhammad Ali simply bought mamluks, or ordered that his mamluks were to be made into majors and lieutenant-colonels but must know how to read and write. Papers for manumitting them were prepared and they were all set to become field officers.⁸⁰ Ibrahim complained at the low calibre of such instant officers and asked irately how, if they were incapable of controlling their men, 'can we take them into the lands of other people (*bilad al-nas*)?'⁸¹

There was a high casualty rate among second lieutenants in the Syrian campaign, and in some cases battalions lost all their young officers. Ibrahim then fell on the novel idea of appointing Turkish prisoners of war as second lieutenants in the Egyptian army, and nearly had a mutiny on his hands. The troops grumbled that they had risked their lives to capture the Turks, and now they were to become their superiors in the field. Ibrahim was in a quandary. If he promoted the sergeant-majors he

would not have enough N.C.O.'s left.⁸² He decided to promote Egyptians from the ranks, much to his father's dismay. The *wali* did not believe that Egyptians possessed leadership qualities. Under duress he finally allowed Ibrahim to promote Egyptians to the rank of captain (*yuzbashi*).

Ibrahim laboured to convince his father that the Egyptians not only made good soldiers but also made better officers than the Turks. He wrote a long letter to his father laying the facts before him. He recounted how he had ordered a Turkish *yuzbashi* to occupy an enemy position, but the man barely moved twenty paces then held back in fear. Ibrahim then asked an Egyptian *yuzbashi*, 'who jumped from his position and advanced so swiftly that the rest of the platoon was encouraged to follow him'. He then wondered why his father refused to promote Egyptians to the higher ranks of the officer corps. They showed an excess of courage, '*fart al-shajaa* ... and their love for us grows as they rise in the ranks, so what prevents your Highness from appointing a number of them to the rank of lieutenant-colonel?' He added that after

twenty years of experience, I can say that if 300 out of 1,000 Turks are loyal (*mukhlisin*), then 700 out of 1,000 Arabs are loyal. Believe me because I am the most truthful of your Highness's sons and the most loyal to him. I also speak plainly because I have been raised from my youth in a free military way and believe in plainly asking why do we not promote the Arabs?⁸³

By Arabs here Ibrahim meant the native Egyptians. His ending phrase was a request to create medals for the men who deserved recognition of their valour.

In appealing to his father to promote Egyptians to the higher ranks of the army, Ibrahim was impressing on his father the notion that ethnicity was of no consequence, that an elite of Egyptian military personnel was possible. Muhammad Ali, whose ideology posited an elite of Turco-Circassian ethnic stock, was disturbed by his son's desires. To him Egypt was a piece of property he had acquired by guile and ability. The Egyptians were there to do his bidding; they could become cannon fodder, workers and fallahin, or even minor administrators, but no more. The very ethnicity of the Turks made them fit for government. That explains why works of sixteenth-century Ottoman authors were published in the new press at Bulaq, to sustain and feed the cultural and linguistic separateness of the rulers from the ruled. The rulers spoke and read Turkish, the ruled spoke Arabic. The rulers were Ottoman gentlemen, the Egyptians were dirty peasants, and one could not mix the two. Such an imperialist attitude was not unique to Muhammad Ali. It was to be duplicated years later by Lord Cromer in Egypt, who believed

that Egyptians were a subject-race fit to be ruled and incapable of habits of self-government. To Muhammad Ali his very ethnicity was a justification of leadership, an entitlement to leadership and domination of the country. It also allowed him to remain within the family of the Ottoman empire culturally, even when he was fighting that very family.

Ibrahim on the other hand hated his Ottoman identity, and had no option then but to opt for his new 'Egyptian' one, and to push for a recognition of its virtues.

The appeal to promote Egyptians to the rank of lieutenant-colonel (*binbashi*) did not work, and it was only under Said that Egyptians finally were promoted to the rank of colonel. In 1882 there were only four native Egyptian colonels in the entire Egyptian army.

Although Egyptians were not promoted beyond a certain rank, they rapidly displaced Turkish officers in the lower ranks. In 1829 the *wali* even dismissed the Turkish officers in his navy and replaced them by Egyptians trained by French naval officers.⁸⁴ He also disbanded 2,000 artillery men who received 60 pts. per day as a wage, and replaced them by Egyptians who were paid one fourth that amount, 15 pts. a day.

Consul Salt gave the troops of the *nizam jadid* high marks. 'In arms and firing', he said, 'nearly as perfect as European troops.'⁸⁵

Conscription had two adverse reactions on the country. In the first place it meant removing necessary manpower from agriculture, which could absorb any extra hands, let alone lose some necessary hands among the youngest and most able-bodied. Secondly, recruitment of fallahin was to be given by some historians as a reason for uprisings in the land. Revolts and uprisings are the third major problem of internal policy that the state faced. Baer mentioned five 'peasant revolts' as taking place during that period, and Rivlin added two further ones.⁸⁶ These uprisings took place in 1812, 1820-1, 1822-3, 1824 in two places, Minufiyya and Qusair, and in 1846.

In 1812 the government imposed a policy of monopolizing grains in the country. That same year Drovetti recounts a series of dramatic events. He explained that, when the Egyptian army in the Hijaz first met with defeat in 1812, four of the chief generals returned to Egypt in flight by various routes and conspired to overthrow Muhammad Ali and put in his place an Albanian named Ahmad Bey. Their plot was uncovered and defused. Ahmad Bey was poisoned and the other three were exiled. Drovetti added that there was question of exiling Laz-Agmad-Aga [sic], commander of a corp stationed in upper Egypt: 'this leader enjoys an excellent reputation in the army and is feared because of his influence and spirit of enterprise, [he] is the only [man] who can overshadow Mohamed Ali's supreme authority'.⁸⁷

Drovetti then describes uprisings in Upper Egypt, 'a few uprisings' against the tax collectors and the troops sent to support them. He said that measures of extreme rigour had to be taken, several villages were burnt down and the inhabitants slaughtered. But he then added, 'it is believed that these movements were part of the plan for insurrection of the exiled leaders and that Laz Ahmad was no stranger [to them]'. His reasoning was that this was not strictly speaking a 'peasant revolt' but was fomented by Laz Ahmad, who was governor (amir) of Qus and Qina, in his attempt at a coup d'état. That may well have been, but the population of Upper Egypt who had been rudely handled by the new regime for their presumed support of the mamluks, rose in an attempted revolt against Muhammad Ali on the assumption of an imminent return to power of the mamluks, with the aid of Laz Ahmad. That certainly would account for the burning of villages and the slaughter of the inhabitants, which refusal only to pay taxes would not have. It was tempting to assume that a revolt coming on the heels of a grain monopoly would be seen in the light of cause and effect, but there was more to the incident than the effects of a grain monopoly which bred animosity; there was a hint of an attempt at overthrowing the government which went beyond a simple peasant revolt.

The rest of the insurrections concentrated on two regions: Minufiyya and Sharqiyya in the Delta and the region of Isna in the Said. The revolts in the Said began with one in 1820/1236 led by a man named Shaikh Ahmad al-Salah. He gathered a following allegedly of 40,000 men and, according to Mubarak, became so conceited (*ightar*) that he set up his followers as governors. He seized government stores and government funds. When an army was sent out against him, the revolt ended with the first shot.⁸⁸ Mubarak gives no hint as to what caused the revolt. A year later another Ahmad, surnamed al-Mahdi or al-Wazir, started a similar movement in al-Bairat, near Luxor. Drovetti described it as 'a riot of peasants in the region of Esneh and Kéneh against the innovations introduced by Mohamed Aly'. '— Peasants easily dispersed', he ends tersely.⁸⁹ St John gives a more elaborate eye-witness account of the revolt and the fallahin who followed the 'prophet', who was rumoured to have a following of 3,000 men. The 'prophet' told his followers that the Prophet Muhammad and his angels would be fighting for them and that cannon balls would not affect them.⁹⁰ The following year another revolt was incited by an Ahmad 'mogrebin fanatique'.⁹¹ Ahmad had refused to pay a tax levied upon his goods imported at Qusair on his way back from Mecca, and had roused the local inhabitants into revolt. He went to Qina, Isna, and Farshut where the army met them. Mengin recounts the events,

commenting that in Qina and Isna the people had shown the greatest distaste for conscription.

All these insurrections were clear examples of resistance to government policies of various kinds: to conscription, to *corvée*, to the new tax, the *firda*, imposed in 1822, to an increase of land taxes that went up to 22 per cent. At the same time these were years of natural catastrophes. The Nile flooded the fields in 1820 and ruined the crops; this also heralded the first appearance of the cholera epidemic, which was particularly traumatic. Plague broke out in 1823 and drought in 1824. The drought continued into the next year, which saw another outbreak of plague. These were years of physical fear, of hunger and moral tribulation. Epidemics have always been regarded as a scourge from heaven to punish people for their sins, or for 'innovations'. In times of crisis people everywhere turn to the Almighty or to supernatural phenomena to explain their tribulations and console their anguish. Religious leaders take the lead, and urge the population to turn to God and depart from their sinful ways, and the population follows them. That is why the leaders of these insurrections had religious overtones, as we can tell by their surnames of al-Mahdi or al-Salah. These leaders told the fallahin they would be invincible in battle, that government bullets would melt before they hit their targets. Thus, as well as being fallah movements of resistance to the government, these revolts took on the air of millenary or chiliastic movements.

The uprising led by Ahmad the Moroccan was a revolt of disgruntled artisans and pieceworkers of the textile trade.⁹² The region of Qina had been a centre of textiles as well as of agriculture, both of which had been disrupted by the changes in the Egyptian economy. Especially was this the case with the textile trade which had been practically ruined by imported British textiles. The Sudan conquest had also managed to ruin a number of small merchants and entrepreneurs who had made their livelihood out of the caravan, and who were put out of business. The large-scale *tujjar* had been coopted into the administration or had turned to other occupations, but the small-scale merchants had been ruined. The merchants, being coopted or put out of business, were no longer in a position to control the artisans as they had been wont to do in the past, and some indeed may have joined them in their uprising.

The uprisings in the Delta took place in two regions which had important bedouin populations. In 1823 Drovetti reported 'an insurrection ... in the province of Menouff. It was provoked by the too high exactions of Mohamed Aly Pasha's agents and by military conscription'.⁹³ The last uprising in 1846 was reported by Hekekyan in his diaries. He wrote that in Sharqiyya were 'entire villages arming

themselves to defy the officers of the government', and that the men who were taken to work in the rice mills ran back to work on their own fields where they earned more by working for themselves.⁹⁴ On the following page he added that the absence of Muhammad Ali and Ibrahim in Istanbul had produced, 'a series of passive revolts', some village shaikhs refusing to pay their customary taxes or send men to serve the government needs. Hekekyan wrote that in many instances government executives were beaten off from the villages by force or by intimidation. He said that a *mudir* told him that the pasha took 80 per cent of the produce, and the men avoided paying the capitation tax, the *firda*, by running away from their villages, and that the wages paid to the labourers were imaginary for no money was issued.⁹⁵ Both Minuf and Sharqiyya had large bedouin concentrations. Minuf saw the influx of tribes from the Libyan desert, of the Awlad Ali fleeing from tribal warfare in their regions, while Sharqiyya was an area of Hanadi and Hawwara tribes. The former were newly sedentarized peoples who had not learned to bow to authority. Members of such tribes had in the past been used as cavalry auxiliaries by the mamluks, and indeed some of them continued to be used in that capacity by Muhammad Ali's army. Such men may have resented being conscripted into the army as common soldiers, on a par with the fallahin whom they despised.

Jabarti's chronicles abound with accounts of uprisings, both rural and urban, and we can go so far as to say that uprisings were endemic to the eighteenth century. They were rarer under Muhammad Ali. Fallahin did break out into acts of violence when their individual or collective rights had been too often infringed, when they were too shamelessly exploited, or when they resented government control. The fallah has always hated the government, with good reason, and has always resented paying his taxes, and probably continues to do so to the present day. He manifested his discontent by periodic outbreaks of violence against the tax collector and the local-authority figure. These outbreaks were seldom prolonged; nonetheless they were important examples of peasant resistance. Such resistance took the form of increasing rural disorder, with acts of brigandage, piracy, crop burning and crop sabotage. One can read in such actions the protest of primitive rebels, in Hobsbawm's use of the term, during periods of inflation, as in the twenties and the thirties. One would have expected more overt acts of protest to occur in areas that were undergoing crop changes, such as in Middle Egypt, where regions were being turned to cash crops – sugarcane, and cotton – which slowly displaced the fallah's own food crops. Yet Middle Egypt was not involved in uprisings; these were concentrated in the Said and in the Delta. It may well be that these regions,

which had already grown sugar-cane and cotton in smaller quantities under the mamluks, accepted the expansion of these crops with equanimity, for, as Barrington Moore has shown, 'what infuriates peasants is a new and sudden imposition or demand that strikes many people at once and that is a break with accepted rules and customs',⁹⁶ which a gradual increase of crop acreage would not have done. Muhammad Ali said to Boisilecomte, 'with me the fallah earns little, but he is assured of sale, and our prices are calculated to allow him a reasonable gain'.⁹⁷

The rest of the country was remarkable for its tranquillity. The government possessed greater powers of coercion, but repression alone has never given a country tranquillity, nor rendered it immune from acts of violence or protest. The fallah, cowed by the government, generally resisted it passively. He may have wanted a period of tranquillity after the upheavals of the past decades, and the past natural calamities that had befallen the country. The natural leaders of the fallahin, the village shaiyks, had improved their own lots and, becoming part of the government apparatus, managed to keep the fallahin quiescent. It may be that the fallah, in spite of the exactions laid upon him, still had enough left to him to accept the system.

Muhammad Ali knew the value of his reforms, but he also knew that reforms are ephemeral and seldom win permanent friends. He was obsessed by the fear that the Ottomans were plotting to topple him, which fear was perfectly justified, since they eventually sought to do so. He was equally obsessed by a fear that his achievements would turn to dust. In 1829 Mimaut had reported the pasha's fears to Paris: 'Muhammad Ali can hide from no one, nor hide from himself that, in spite of his efforts to give this country a military establishment, to organize and civilize it, and in spite of the prodigious results he has obtained, the means employed to found his system have raised discontent and misery, and that his work, once attacked, will find many hands to demolish it, and will, unless some unexpected help appears, collapse in a little while.'⁹⁸

Whether these fears were real or the *wali* had articulated them at that time in order to prepare the ground for his invasion of Syria, is moot. What is perfectly clear is that the *wali* knew that his position and that of his successors in Egypt did not depend on any popularity contest within the country, for there would always be local elements ready to join the Ottomans against the government, whatever the government, and that his only hope for survival was to neutralize any Ottoman attempts against his position in Egypt. When we understand that fear, a genuine one on his part, we can clearly appreciate his need for declaring his independence from the empire, his need for going into Syria, and forcing the recognition of the Powers to that independence.

Agricultural changes

The concept that economic systems are self-regulating and that in time they will work out for the greatest benefit of man is one that came in with laissez-faire reasoning and post-dated Muhammad Ali's thinking. Muhammad Ali thought in economic terms, as does every merchant; to him and to his age the congruence of economics and politics was obvious as it had been obvious to the mamluks and the *tujjar* when they had tried to control the resources of the country, with less success than the *wali* had.

A mercantilist approach to government could work only when the government was centralized and had a free hand in managing its trade. Two requirements arose from that approach. The first was that such a government must needs become independent from the Ottoman empire in order to run its financial affairs as it pleased. That was also the conclusion reached by Ali Bey al-Kabir. A second and equally important requirement was that pursuit of such a policy should not conflict with the economic interests of other, more powerful, mercantile countries.

The first steps taken by the new administration were then in the direction of restoring fiscal equilibrium in the country and raising money. When the mamluks in the immediate past had been faced with a similar problem of how to raise money, they had come up with an easy answer: forced loans and increased taxation. All manner of extra-legal taxes had been imposed on the fallah to the point where the fallah either actively or passively rebelled, that is, he deserted the land, set fire to the crops, or rose in rebellion when the burden became unbearable and when he could gain the support of some of the native elite. Once the taxes had been paid for a number of years, they were registered and became official. In that fashion the fallah paid some 24 different taxes.¹ He paid *mal al-hurr* to the *multazim*, who out of that paid the *miri*, or legal land tax, and two other taxes and kept the rest, the *faiz*. Next the fallah paid the *multazim* the *barrani*, or external, the *mudaf*, added on, *al-wajba*, the impost; he paid the *kushufiyya* to the provincial governor

and paid hospitality dues in kind – sheep, butter, fowls – to feed the *multazim* and his horde of tax collectors for as many days as they chose to remain in the village while collecting their dues. He paid the soldiers who accompanied the *multazim* and paid off the bedouin who threatened his crops and livestock. In one village in Sharqiyya the legal and the extraordinary taxes came to 192,766 paras out of which 42,526 paras were *miri*, 128,695 were *faiz* going into the *multazim*'s pocket, and 21,945 paras went to various other impositions.² In Gharbiyya in 1800/1215 the *faiz* was 72,340 pts., the *miri* was 71,722 pts., while the *barrani* was 68,331 pts. so that the government tax was one third the total sum imposed on the fallah. One of the worst cases of tax abuse reported was in the village of Zankalun which paid 250,817 pts. as *faiz*, 169,231 as *miri* and then the enormous sum of 751,200 as *barrani*.³ Zankalun had an area of 5,314 faddans out of which 1,225 were *usya* and untaxed; thus each taxed faddan paid some 2,865 pts. Other areas registered the faddan as paying 1,955 pts. or less.⁴

Taxes were collected in cash and in kind, in wheat and in barley necessary for the mamluk cavalry. The daily assignments in kind to the regiments came to one ardab of wheat and one of barley per man where the ardab was 5.44 imperial bushels. That explains why the mamluks were frequently able to corner the grain market in bad years. The practice of collecting taxes in cash and in kind was continued, especially in bad years when cash was in short supply. Tax collection was the bane of the fallah, and folk poetry described the terror which struck the hearts of the villagers when they heard of the coming of the tax collectors, *nazlat-al kashif*. One unknown village bard wrote:

My temples have whitened since *nazlat al-kashif*
And my heart has become all fear and trembling
The day when the diwan came, my bones loosened
And I doubt my own soul from fear.⁵

Fear of the tax collector, the *multazim* and his hordes, the bedouin and his, was a constant in fallah life, not only because it extracted from him his surplus but because it was haphazard, capricious and unstructured. The mamluk beys extorted money whenever they needed funds, without regard to whether the taxes had or had not been paid. On occasion the taxes would remain unpaid for a year, and at other times they were collected several times over in the same year. The element of the unknown was always present, especially during the last twenty years of the eighteenth century when the country was going through an upheaval.

The *multazimun* in the past had mostly come from the class of

mamluk beys, but in the eighteenth century *tujjar*, ulama, bedouin, and women joined the ranks of the tax farmers, albeit in lesser degree than the mamluks who remained the largest group of tax farmers.⁶ Many of the tax farmers were absentee, and collected their dues or *faiz*, through their agents, the village leaders, the shaikhs and *umad* of the village. In time, and certainly by the last half of the eighteenth century, these shaikhs became money-lenders, and petty landowners within their own purlieus. By virtue of their authority in the village, they became a local rural elite, and the intermediaries between the fallah and the *multazim*.

Society at that time was built on a series of intermediaries acting as buffers between the population and the administration. Guilds in the towns had elders who assigned and collected the taxes from the guild members, and intervened on behalf of the guild with the administration when necessary. Individual members did not have to face the administration. The minorities relied on their religious leaders to act as intermediaries between them and the administration, while the populace had recourse to the ulama. The authority of the central government was gradually usurped by the intermediaries, especially in times of crisis. The intermediary performed the function of a buffer, but also extracted some value from his services, either in terms of authority or in financial terms. This was the case with the village shaikh by the mid-eighteenth century, who came to be the power broker in the village, the money lender, and the petty landlord forming the rural notability. The surplus from land was distributed four ways in consequence of that system: the minimum went to the fallah, some to the village shaikh, much to the *multazim* and his hordes and a small percentage, the land-tax (*miri*) reached the central treasury. In short the system, though it benefited a large number of people, was wasteful and unproductive in terms of the central treasury. While the various intermediaries between the fallah and the treasury benefited in some measure, the bulk of the funds went to the mamluks, who used the wealth unproductively. They used wealth to import luxury items, to buy slaves or mercenaries and to buy armaments. Little, if any, of the wealth that was extorted from the fallah was reinvested into the country, especially during the last decades of the eighteenth century. In brief, no primitive accumulation of capital permitting further investment was possible.

When the Ottomans reconquered Egypt in 1801, Sultan Selim tried to change the system of land tenure, claiming that it had been rendered null and void by the reconquest, according to Ottoman custom. Because the hold of the Ottomans on Egypt was tenuous, that attempt at changing land tenure fell through lack of power to implement it. It did

Egypt in the reign of Muhammad Ali

not go unnoticed, however, and in due course Muhammad Ali took a leaf out of Selim's book.

The search for funds led the government to its first step: control of agricultural resources through a change in the system of land tenure and taxation. Whether these notions were derived from blueprints that the French had set up for Egypt under Menou, or from early Ottoman practice or from sheer common sense, the fact remained that a major source of income for the state was diverted into private pockets and the state coffers were consequently empty. Anyone with any notion of government, and certainly any mercantilist who believed in the necessity of government regulation of the sources of wealth, would have turned his attention to a reformation of that system, as did Muhammad Ali. He urgently needed funds to oil the wheels of the administration, and to pay the army. Popular acclaim would not pay the government bureaucrats or the army and without these two pillars the *wali* would lie at the mercy of the Ottoman authorities should they choose to depose him or send a new *wali* to replace him, or even should a foreign power decide to occupy Egypt.

The *wali* began by a series of tentative steps, the first of which was imposing occasionally a forced loan or a tax (*firda*) in cash and in kind. This was imposed on the population but the ulama of the Azhar, the *wali*'s main allies at the time, and the poor were exempted.⁷ The ulama took advantage of that situation to buy up lands and take fallahin under their protection.⁸ The rest of the population resented that exemption of the ulama.

In 1806 the government arrogated to itself three quarters of the *faiz*, half to be paid by the fallah and half by the *multazim*, again exempting the ulama.⁹ The following year a tax was imposed on *masmuh* lands,¹⁰ followed by taxes on *rizqa* and *usya* land as well as sharing the *faiz* with the *multazimun*.¹¹ This last move so incensed Umar Makram that he refused to go along with it, and thereby wrought his own destitution and exile. All previous requests for funds from the *multazimun*, the guilds and the *tujjar* had been funneled through Makram, who had raised the money and had talked all the officials involved into paying the sums requested, in the belief that these requests would not set precedents, were for *ad hoc* purposes, and once the crisis had gone would not be renewed. The crisis of course differed with every request; once it was to pay the army its salary, then to pay the Albanians so they could leave the country, then to pay the Delhis for the same reason, etc. Muhammad Ali had no control over funding and was forced to make these requests and channel them through his intermediaries. Behind that piecemeal system of raising money there was the firm intention that, once the opposition

had been destroyed, Egypt's financial picture would be overhauled and set up in such a fashion that no administrator would have to beg for money to run the state. It was the eternal dilemma facing any ruler or head of state. Modern states have invented various methods of taxation, best of which is income tax. Early in his reign Muhammad Ali sought to develop a method of taxation that would allow him to acquire sufficient funds to invest as capital in further profitable ventures, as well as to pay for his governmental projects, the army, navy and industry.

Umar Makram could not appreciate that reasoning. He could see only that he had been duped and used by a man he had chosen to support and to trust, that he had given his word to the population which trusted him, and that his word was being dragged into the dust. By then he was no longer necessary to the central authority, and his opposition was a menace to be silenced efficiently and ruthlessly. Muhammad Ali used Makram's colleagues to destroy the man, just as in the past he had used the mamluks to destroy the *wali*, and one faction to destroy the other. By the time Makram had acceded so many times to Muhammad Ali's requests to raise taxes, and had profited by the venture, along with the other ulama who were *multazimun*, he had also created any number of enemies who were willing to step in his shoes, and they helped dispose of him. Some ulama swore to a trumped-up charge that Makram had entered the names of Copts in the register of the *ashraf*, the descendants of the Prophet, when he was marshal, and he was sent into exile to Damietta.¹² The *rizqa* remained untaxed, but they were confiscated and their owners were remunerated with a monthly sum, equal to the *faiz*, for their lifetimes. The government undertook to defray the cost of the charities which were specified in the endowments confiscated.¹³

In 1810 a diwan was called to discuss the needs for funds and to impose a new *firda*. The council reached no decision because some of the members objected to exempting the ulama from the *firda* and the ulama became incensed, so the council was dismissed.¹⁴ The following year a *firda* was imposed on all *iltizamat* and came to four times the rate of the *miri*, *faiz* and *mudaf* taxes;¹⁵ later it went up to the rate of the previous three taxes plus the *barrani* and *usya*.¹⁶

In 1811 when the Said finally fell, the government took the drastic step of confiscating all the *iltizamat* from their previous owners, who were mostly mamluk beys. Those *multazimun* of the region who were not mamluks were dispossessed as well, as a punishment for having sided with the beys – as though they had had a choice in the matter one way or another. The basic reasons behind that move was to undercut the authority of the *multazimun*, to control all rural produce as a first step

towards exporting it, and lastly to compensate loyal followers with grants of land which had been confiscated.

Since taxes had to be collected and land supervised, the rural local elite was coopted. Shaikhs and *umad* were given the tasks previously assigned to the *multazim*, and which had gradually devolved on them. In that fashion the new government earned the support of the village shaikhs, for the time being, and was assured of getting its taxes, for no one was better equipped to extort money from the fallah than the shaikh of the village. The fallah was at first delighted with the *multazim*'s ouster and when some of them came round to collect their dues they were sent off empty-handed and told, 'We are the pasha's fallahin, we no longer work for you.'¹⁷ A diwan was set up to investigate the complaints of the fallahin against their *multazimun*. The multitude of taxes which had previously been imposed on land were cancelled and combined into one tax, the *kharaj*, which was collected at regular times. Before more radical changes could be undertaken, the government carried out a cadastral survey to help it establish the amount of cultivable land available. Cadastral surveys were a classic Ottoman custom, and their value was obvious to rulers, new and old.

In 1814 the Delta was surveyed by Mahmud Bey al-Diwandar and Muallim Ghali Sargios. Three hundred villages were surveyed in the provinces of Gharbiyya, Minufiyya, Mansura, Qaliubiyya, Sharqiyya and Buhaira. When the *umad* and fallahin of Sharqiyya and Gharbiyya showed resistance, the areas had to be surveyed a second time. These provinces had a heavy bedouin population and constantly resisted any incursions by the government on their prerogatives, and any attempts at imposing central control. The total acreage paying the land tax, or *kharaj*, was 1,903,788 faddans. Some areas covering 440,127 faddans were exempted from taxation and included *usya*, *masmuh* and lands not brought under cultivation, *bur*. In 1820/1, Rabi Thani, 1236, a survey of the rest of the agricultural lands was conducted under the supervision of Ibrahim Pasha, and taxable land came to 1,314,927 faddans in the Said, while 1,775,611 faddans were exempted from taxation.¹⁸ The total acreage of land exempted from taxation in both Upper and Lower Egypt was 2,215,738 faddans, comprising land that was *usya* and did not pay tax – although some 56,554 faddans of *usya* land did pay tax and were included in the tax registers¹⁹ – *rizqa*, *bur* and *masmuh* lands. Out of a total acreage of 5,434,455 faddans the land tax was collected on 3,218,715 faddans.

With the first cadastre the tax was set at 11 riyals for the richest land and 2 riyals for the poorest lands in the Delta (where the riyal was equal to 2 pts. and 10 paras). In the Said the richest land was taxed at 20 riyals

and the poorest at 2 riyals. The total land tax was estimated at 39,390,315 riyals, or 177,255 purses (*kis*), where the purse was worth £5, giving a total of £886,275.²⁰ At that time the household expenses for a middle-class Cairene family of four for a year came to 2,600 pts. or £26. An upper-class house cost £150 and a labourer earned 1 pt. or less a day.²¹ One by-product of the cadastral survey was the relative unification of the size of the faddan in the country. In the past the faddan had varied in size as had the unit of measurement, the qasaba. In 1814 Ibrahim wrote to his father to ask him to decide the issue. He said that Muallim Ghali had told him that the Delta faddan was made of 333.3 qasabas while the size of an Upper Egyptian faddan was unknown. Ibrahim added that it seemed that the Upper Egyptian faddan was 400 qasabas or 1,333 metres, while in Lower Egypt it was 333.3 qasabas or 1,000 metres.²² Since the land of the Said fluctuated yearly with the rise and fall of the Nile waters, it made good sense to adopt the measures in use in the Delta, at the same time the differential in the faddan allowed the government to confiscate lands in the Said. Nonetheless the measure of the faddan continued to vary in two provinces as did the length of the qasaba.

Once the cadastre in the Delta was carried out, *multazimun* were dispossessed as tax farmers, although they were compensated by a sum equal to the *faiz*, and with a lifetime tenure of the *usya* lands which had comprised the *iltizam*. These *usya* lands could be transferred, donated, or sold back to the government, 'haqq al-faragh, wa-l hiba wa bayiha li-l hukuma'.²³ Since there was no *usya* land south of Minya, that measure left large areas of land untenanted which the *wali* arrogated to himself, his family and his retainers. He also arrogated former *iltizamat* in the same fashion to his new elite.

Waqf or *rizqa*, agricultural land endowed for charitable purposes, or endowed in trust both to a family and also for charities, was confiscated. *Waqf* lands were estimated to constitute one fifth the total lands under cultivation. Much of that land had been illegally turned into *waqf* as a means of evading tax payments or avoiding confiscation of land by the authorities. The new administration demanded to see the deeds of ownership that proved the legality of the *waqf*. When these could not be produced for a variety of reasons, some of them perfectly legitimate, for example if the *waqf* was ancient, the *waqf* was confiscated. Owners of legal *waqf* were paid a monthly pension and allowed *usya* land in compensation on condition that that land be sold only to the government. These lands could legally be constituted into *waqf* if the owners wished, or could be donated or transferred to the legal heirs.²⁴

All land was parcelled into plots of various sizes and distributed

among the fallahin for cultivation according to time-honoured practice of *athariyya*. This was the right the fallah had, the only one, to till the same piece of land and to pass it on to his heirs so long as the taxes were paid. The shaikhs of the village were entrusted with distributing the land in Upper Egypt every year according to the flood levels, and were also entrusted with distributing the land of a fallah who died without male issue, or who defaulted on his taxes for several years. In recognition of these services the shaikhs were granted 5 faddans out of every 105 as *masmuh al-mashayikh* in some areas, although it differed in others as did the percentage of *zimam* granted to shaikhs. Important *umad* were granted extra land as *masmuh al-masatib*, to defray expenses incurred while offering shelter and hospitality to government officials, or feeding and sheltering travellers.²⁵ *Masmuh* lands of both kinds were exempted from taxation. We have as yet no indication of the full extent of *masmuh* lands, but we do know that in the Delta some 440,127 faddans were exempt from taxation as being either *bur*, *usya* or *masmuh* land. In Upper Egypt the figure for similar land was 1,775,611 faddans exempt from taxation for *bur*, *usya*, *masmuh* and also *ibadiyya* land, i.e., a grand total of 2,215,738 faddans. Barakat estimated that of that total 1,396,378 were *ibadiyya*, leaving a remainder of 819,460 faddans as *usya*, *masmuh* and *bur*. The *usya* lands did not come to more than 73,070, if we are to believe Sami's figures, leaving us with an approximate acreage of 746,390 faddans as *bur* and *masmuh*.²⁶

The *masmuh* lands formed the nucleus of land property owned by the new native rural elite, and in time some of these lands were to develop into the latifundia familiar to a later age, as their owners expanded their holdings, due to a number of devices we shall mention later on. Some owners were also to lose their holdings and revert to the lot of the landless fallah.

Lands were also exempt from taxation for other reasons. For example, if the land remained unwatered as a consequence of a low Nile (*sharaqi*), it was exempted from taxation in some years. However, this policy was not consistently pursued, and at other times only poor lands were exempted when *sharaqi*, or half the *mal* would be collected. At times the shaikhs were accused of carelessness and the responsibility of the lands becoming *sharaqi* blamed on them, and the tax collected as in 1824 and 1825, or the Nile was regarded as having reached a sufficient level, even when some lands remained unwatered as in 1826 and 1827. In 1842 no exemption was henceforth allowed on *sharaqi* lands. Land that was flooded (*mustabhara*) was generally exempted from taxation especially after 1822. Agriculture that had failed (*hayif*) was also exempted. The same principle applied to crops that had been burnt, unless they were

burnt deliberately. Burning crops was a favourite blow perpetrated by families or villages that waged vendettas, and fields were deliberately set on fire by a fallah who did not want to pay taxes on the land. When deliberate malice was established the *mal* was collected, otherwise the lands were exempted from taxation, though past practice had been to make the fallah pay *mal* on two faddans out of five.²⁷ Land policies, while moving in the direction of a mitigated exploitation of the fallah, were not uniform, especially in years of need. The bureaucracy was learning to function and there was sometimes a time lag between orders given and their application.

Hand in hand with these changes in land tenure and in taxation came the monopoly of agricultural production. Monopolies of commodities had long been an established custom for the Ottomans, as was the custom of imposing embargoes on certain items. Egypt had always exported grain to the Ottoman empire, and to the southern Mediterranean, even when the Ottomans had placed an embargo on the sale of grain outside the empire. The same thing had happened when an embargo had been placed on coffee. The beys and *tujjar* simply disregarded such directives when the profits proved tempting enough. Muhammad Ali followed in their footsteps, and disregarded Ottoman injunctions when it suited his pocket to do so. Following Ottoman custom, and in need of ready cash, Muhammad Ali monopolized the stocks of grain in the land and sold them to the British merchants who were buying grain to feed the British army during the Peninsular wars. The rest of the Mediterranean, which normally provided grain, was unable to do so as the result of three years of drought, while Black Sea grain had been cut off from the region through a Russo-Turkish war that lasted until 1812. Consequently Egypt was the sole supplier of grain in large quantities. For the next few years, until 1812, Egyptian grain was exported at exorbitant prices, or so it seemed to the British merchants, who had no other options and were forced to buy at any price. Throughout that decade grain continued to be the single most important item for export.

The fallahin were forbidden to sell their grain to private individuals or merchants and were forced to sell it to the government, at a price fixed by the government. The merchants who had previously been involved in the grain trade became government officials, or lost their profession and had to find other means of livelihood.²⁸

The French consul in Egypt desperately tried to stop the export of grain to the British army and recorded the first grain sale in March 1810;²⁹ Jabarti on the other hand records the first sale as being in 1808. Muhammad Ali excused his actions to Drovetti by explaining that, as he

could not avoid selling grain to the British, he had made it so costly that speculators could not afford the price and would no longer wish to purchase grain.³⁰ The excuse did not work, and in June Drovetti reported, 'Malta has almost no other resource than Egypt to provision herself with grain', while Istanbul, he added, lacked grain and demanded it from Egypt. Drovetti knew that the high export duties sustained Egyptian finances and were necessary to finance the army,³¹ which was still battling the mamluks. Practically every month Drovetti reported ships departing with cargoes of grain for Malta.³² Even the grain that was shipped to the Ottoman capital was imposed with a large export duty, when the capital was suffering famine. Here again Muhammad Ali followed in mamluk footsteps by imposing higher taxes during times of want. Drovetti remarked on the enormous grain resources the *wali* had acquired in the Said and said that other than the sale price, 'he derives duties which reach 10-12 pts. per ardab. Most of these grains go to Malta, others to the islands of the Archipelago, but few to Constantinople where the treasury seizes them'.³³ He also bemoaned the lack of trading activity in Cairo where he reported that nothing was bought or sold.

By October 1810 the current price of wheat was 26 pts. per ardab and the export duty cost another 10 pts., the total coming to 36 pts. per ardab³⁴ and yet an estimated thirty ships were loaded with grain for Malta. Drovetti glumly noted that the price was likely to rise still further. He calculated that each ship could load 1,200 ardabs and come to a total of 1,440,000 pts., which, added to all the amount of grain previously exported, would reach a sum of 3 million francs.³⁵ He pointed out that cloth which used to form the bulk of French exports to the Levant, 'on which we had no fear of foreign competition', was being displaced by cheap British cloth. In the past the British had exported tin, lead, thread, watches, shawls and cottons to Egypt, but, because of the high cost of Egyptian grain and their consequent debts to Egypt, they were selling or dumping cloth which 'by being cheap will be used in preference to that which other nations used to supply'.³⁶ Indian muslin was replacing the cloth which the French and the Italians had been wont to supply Egypt.

Wheat which had been selling locally for 12-15 pts. was exported at 62-80 pts., and the new harvest promised to be an abundant one, leading to heavier trading. France, Egypt's foremost European trading partner in the past, slowly and inexorably was being displaced by British trade, which perforce needed to sell to Egypt if only to pay for the grain being purchased. The items of British trade which had predominated in the past no longer headed the list of commodities sold, and we see cloth, weapons and ammunition, cannon-balls, listed among British exports.³⁷

In January 1811 the British contracted for 1,600,000 pts. worth of grain.³⁸ A month later the Ottomans imposed an embargo on the exportation of grain outside the Ottoman empire. The pasha defended himself by claiming that wheat sales supplied the funds he needed to raise fortifications that defended Alexandria against invasion. Furthermore they paid for an increase in the size of the army and financed preparations for the impending war in the Hijaz against the Wahhabis.³⁹ He also gave the added excuse that as the country was short of specie he was obliged to accept taxes paid in kind, in grain, and was obliged to trade in that commodity.⁴⁰

The Ottoman embargo affected the Egyptian situation little and grain continued to be sold to British merchants, but, seeing how well the grain trade was going, the *wali* decided to open a warehouse or *comptoir* in Malta which would sell grain in Spain and Portugal and buy whatever Egypt needed from Europe. Drovetti was upset by such a move, which he described as a departure from the 'healthy ideas' the *wali* had, and yet he was the first to underline the progress made in Egyptian finances and to point out by May that the grain trade had brought some 45-50 million pts. in profit.⁴¹ Shortages in other parts of Europe may have induced the notion of basing Egyptian agents in Malta to sell to Sicily, for example, but it also made the government 'the only trader in Egypt, since the authorities exclude all competition and all rivalry'.⁴²

A little of the profit which the government made on wheat sales reached the fallah. At a time when grain was being sold for 100 pts. for export, it was sold in Cairo for 18 pts.⁴³ There was method behind that price differential for the price of grain within the land must needs be kept low and stable to avoid want and famine, while the export duties which were slapped on grain yielded a healthy profit to the state.

Although the British government received its grain supplies, British consul, Missett, who had returned to Alexandria in July 1811, sourly noted the *wali* 'respects none of the privileges granted England in virtue of our Capitulations with the Porte. He has sold or taken into his own hands various monopolies; the old duties have been increased, and the new ones are exacted upon all articles of import and export; and the only answer which ... he returns to the remonstrances of European agents is, that he has the power of making any international regulations within his own government.' Missett added that while the pasha nominally acknowledged the authority of the sultan, 'He refused to obey any order from His Highness that may stand in opposition to his own private interest.'⁴⁴ Missett used terms like 'the capricious will of Mohamed Aly' and his 'arbitrary disposition'. There was little caprice involved in these transactions. Muhammad Ali had simply cut out the middlemen. The

government, using former merchants, bought directly from the fallah, and sold directly to the buyer, also cutting out the merchants who had previously bought the grain and then sold it on the European market. In that fashion the Egyptian government could multiply its profits at the expense of two sets of merchants who had previously gained from such procedures. Missett, who represented the interests of the British mercantile community in Egypt, was incensed at such steps as cut out the merchants. He complained at the 'exorbitant' price at which wheat was sold, and said that the *wali* used commercial deceptions which would disgrace the lowest of mankind. This last remark referred to the fact that the *wali*, after receiving payment for instant delivery of grain, had delayed loading the vessels until others, freighted to his own account, had been loaded. The merchants had to pay a long demurrage, and were probably beaten at the ports of arrival by the Egyptian ships which could sell their grain at a higher rate.

Too many agents for the same commodity spoiled the market and the Turks, Greeks and Europeans sent by the *wali* to Malta, Spain and Portugal with wheat cargoes competed against each other and were eventually disbanded. By the end of 1811 Drovetti estimated that the *wali* had extracted an annual revenue of 8 million pts. from indirect taxes, customs and appaltos, added to the profits made in trade.⁴⁵ He believed that Egypt could easily export more than 200,000 ardabs without depriving the local inhabitants. The following year that rosy picture faded when the waters of the Nile receded too rapidly and the crop was ravaged by insects. The price of foodstuffs then doubled. Wheat consumption in the country had dropped, in part because the army had gone to the Hijaz and wheat was exported to feed it, and because the largest consumers, the *wali* and his family and retainers, 'make much less a show of luxury and of display than the former mamluks'.⁴⁶ The fallahin seldom ate wheat but instead ate dura, maize and millet.

In spite of the poor harvest the *wali* estimated his future profits at 20 million pts., and to help transport the grain down the river to Alexandria 200 germes were constructed for river traffic, and also to help transport the troops as well as the grain. By June 1813 the Turco-Russian war was winding to a close and grain from the Black Sea region was shortly to become available on the market in the Mediterranean. That news plus the low harvest decreased the price of wheat, although some 40,000 ardabs were sold at 3,060,000 pts.⁴⁷

Muhammad Ali was now considered the richest pasha in the Ottoman empire, Drovetti claimed, and had an annual income of 20 million francs a year. The Egyptian archives are more modest and only in 1813-14/1229 do

they register the first budget increase of 347,521 pts. or 434,401 francs, and estimate the yearly income to be a little under 9 million francs.⁴⁸ But the boom was coming to an end, or at least was slowing down, for Black Sea wheat was now on the market in Europe, and Egypt was stricken by a plague that carried off one third of the population of Alexandria and spread to the hinterland where it ravaged the population and disrupted agriculture for six months, from January to June 1813. Once the plague was over, plans were made to increase government revenue further. Wheat continued to be an export item after 1814, and was exported to Trieste, Leghorn, Genoa, Malta and Spain. In 1816 Egyptian ships carried grain to Sweden to trade for pig-iron.⁴⁹ By 1822, in a report sent to his minister, Drovetti estimated that from 1816 Egypt had exported 600–700 thousand ardabs of grain a year as compared to the maximum of 100 thousand under the mamluk beys.⁵⁰ The trend towards the export of wheat in increasing quantity continued with various ups and downs depending on the internal conditions of the country, whether it had seen a good Nile or a bad one, in which case the crop would be either plentiful or devastated, and whether the wheat was needed to feed the army on a campaign or not. By 1841 we find that 1,403,305 ardabs of wheat were exported.⁵¹ Monopoly of wheat internally continued until 1830.

The next step following the accumulation of capital was to invest it in projects that would increase the acreage of land under cultivation and increase production as well as introduce new money-making crops.

During the last decades of the eighteenth century, because of internal upheavals, the canals had been untended and in consequence had become silted and blocked. Muhammad Ali set out to clear the old canals and create new ones.

Agriculture in Egypt depended largely on a system of basin irrigation, by which the land was flooded by the Nile in August, and remained under flood and fallow for six months of the year. After the waters had receded around late October or November the land was sown with a crop known as winter, or *shitwi* crop. This was mostly wheat, barley, beans, barsim or clover, lentils, fenugreek and chick peas. While barsim could be cropped several times, the other products were cropped once and *shitwi* land yielded one crop a year.

Another crop grown after the winter one, and needing extensive irrigation, was sown in summer and consequently called *saifi*. This crop could only grow along the edge of the river where water could be raised by some device and the land irrigated. The crops sown in summer were rice, sugar-cane, indigo and cotton, as well as the staple of the fallah, millet, or *dura saifi*. A third crop was grown while the Nile was rising and called *Nili*. That too needed irrigation by some device.⁵²

The irrigation projects that were planned by the government were aimed at storing the Nile waters and using them when they were needed. Summer crops could be sown more extensively in that fashion, and, since these were the main money-making crops, an attempt was made to increase the area of land turned to summer crops. Between the winter and summer crops the land was left fallow or sown with a catch crop like *barsim*. Land sown with cereals was left fallow to recover its strength. In areas of basin irrigation the Nile silt, and the land lying fallow for a period to be aired and dried, restored its fertility and strength. With the advent of perennial irrigation constant sowing weakened the land, hence the extensive use of fertilizers in the twentieth century. With basin irrigation small areas could be grown with two crops a year, but with perennial irrigation large areas could grow two and even three crops a year.

The major public works that were carried out created *saifi* canals, three *rayahs*, or main canals, the Mahmudiyya canal which became a waterway, and various dams and barrages. Clot Bey claimed that 32 canals (*tira*) were built, ten *jizr* or dykes, including one that was 6 metres wide and 2 metres high going from Jabal al-Silsila to the Mediterranean on either side of the Nile,⁵³ forty-one dams and barrages (*qantara*). These works totalled some 1,135,775 metres and stored 116,050,843 cubic metres of water.⁵⁴

Such public works demanded a tremendous outlay of manpower, and their upkeep equally demanded extensive manpower in order to dredge, clean and maintain the canals which would otherwise become clogged up with silt and hold less water. Also dykes could spring leaks if they were not tended. Villagers were called up to shore the canal banks or entire villages would become flooded should the Nile waters rise to dangerous levels. This form of *corvée* to stave off a crisis continues to be used to the present day, although only in exceptional years since the dams on the Nile have mitigated dangers of flood. Nonetheless, from time immemorial when the waters rose all the fallahin were called out on *corvée* to shore up the river banks. That task was exceedingly unpopular with the fallahin, who were reluctant to do it year after year, when they could see no physical reason. But by the time the physical reason had become obvious it would have been too late, so the work had to be done willy nilly. Every year, therefore, orders were sent out from the administration to shore up the dykes and clean and dredge the canals before the flood waters arrived. In one such circular the *wali* threatened all his *nuzzar* in Upper Egypt and ordered 24,000 men gathered for the task. He wrote to his officials, '... if you say it upsets the fallahin when there is no need, then I say the boy does not willingly go to school but is

forced by his parents until he grows older and knows the value of learning, so driving all the men to dykes and canals is difficult for them but is necessary'. He added that if the fallahin would not go willingly then the *nuzzar* must summon soldiers from the governor (*mudir*) and force (*qahran wa jabran*) the fallahin out.⁵⁵ That measure was sandwiched in between two years when the floods had been disastrous, 1834 and 1837. Woe betide the officials who failed to keep up the canals. 'If land is *sharaqi* because Jisr Banu Khalid is not well shored up there is no punishment but death', warned the *wali* to all *nuzzar aqsam*.⁵⁶ 'If we see one *qirat* of land unwatered we will bury you in it', threatened another circular.⁵⁷ The fallahin were responsible for two months of corvée labour out of the year, usually during the months when the land was lying idle and there was little agricultural activity, but on occasion the period of corvée was extended.

The canals and the dykes were not built with unpaid corvée labour, a popular misconception about that age. The workers were paid a wage, as Jabarti reported regarding the digging on the Ashrafiyya canal: 'every man at the outset received 10 riyals and 10 more were deducted from his taxes. During work he was paid a piastre a day. One saw fallahin going in droves (*afwajan*) to work areas.'⁵⁸ The workers were not only paid wages (*bi-l ujra*)⁵⁹ but were also fed a soup (*shurba* or *dashisha*) morning and evening, 'because it is winter', said a circular regarding work on the Mahmudiyya Canal in 1819. The workers were also fed meat every few days (*kul iddat ayyam*).⁶⁰ Orders were issued to all the *mamurun* to feed the workers daily and to issue them rations of cereal ranging from 300 dirhems to 500 dirhems of *dura*.

Foreign observers, some of whom were biased against the *wali* because he controlled the country's resources and would not allow them a free hand in commerce and trade, have accused the *wali* of working his people without payment, and specifically have raised that accusation during work on the Mahmudiyya canal, which was said to have involved some quarter of a million men and was dug in a great hurry. That canal was the first major project of such magnitude and was carried out in a disorganized fashion, for the government had not yet learnt how to organize large-scale projects. No doubt abuses occurred, but the government did try to feed and pay the workers, and mitigate abuses.

Paid and fed notwithstanding, the fallahin did not like corvée labour and on occasion resisted it because it disrupted their lives and took them away from their homes and villages. Often their women and children followed them because they had no other means of support and suffered hardship. While the government learned how to handle affairs more efficiently the fallah paid the price by suffering want, deprivation and

dislocation. The benefits to be derived from these large-scale works were obvious to the pasha and to his entourage, but they were not at all apparent to the fallah, who saw little advantage to his work on these ditches, especially if they were dug far away from his home village and benefited no one in his *zimam*.

The public works allowed for the extension of summer crops and also allowed for the introduction of new crops into the country.

Watering crops regularly was an elementary lesson that any fallah child knew. Having increased irrigation by public works, Muhammad Ali was determined that his efforts should be rewarded, and the crops irrigated at least three times in winter by mechanical devices such as *sawaqi*. The chief engineer of the Delta received orders to set up *sawaqi* in all areas of the Delta to ensure that they were irrigated.⁶¹ It was estimated that some 52,836 *sawaqi* were built.⁶² The *saqiya* can water three quarters of a faddan in 24 hours, but the waterwheels wear out and have to be replaced every five years, so upkeep is necessary. *Sawaqi* were registered in the government dossiers as was the land they irrigated. If these lands fell below the registered number then the *saqiya* was used to water adjacent lands. Anyone found damaging a *saqiya* was severely punished.⁶³

The entire irrigation system that had existed was overhauled, all the canals were dredged and deepened so they could hold summer water, for example in 1829/1244-5 orders were issued to dredge the canals in the province of Gharbiyya, of which there were 43 with a length of 74,302 qasaba. That project included building in Mahalla a new canal with a work force of 32,300 men.⁶⁴

These public works caused a major increase in the land under cultivation which was unmatched at any later time. Unfortunately many of the statistical figures formerly used by scholars when studying that age were erroneous. Some of these accounts, like those of Mengin for example, halved the population and doubled the taxes, which gave a skewed look to the system of taxation. His cadastral figures, which he claims to be derived from government sources, are belied by the figures given by Egyptian government records.⁶⁵ Barakat's recent work on landownership has set us right. The area of land that was taxable before the public works had been carried out was 3,218,715 faddans. That area came to 4,395,303⁶⁶ in 1863, that is, early in the reign of Ismail and before any other public works had been carried out. From these two figures one can conclude that 1,176,588 faddans had been brought under cultivation, thanks to the reforms and public works carried out by Muhammad Ali.

The expansion of arable land was accompanied by the introduction of

new crops. The story of long staple cotton, first introduced in 1821, is well known and ably covered in Roger Owen's *Cotton and the Egyptian Economy: 1820-1914*. Other crops equally important to Egypt were encouraged. The cultivation of sugar-cane, which had been grown in limited quantities, was expanded and in time became a major industry, as did the growth of indigo, flax and rice. Orders were given for trees to be planted on *bur* lands.⁶⁷ Some 200 new crops were introduced into Egypt at the *wali*'s behest; these ranged from fruit, like quince, varieties of oranges, lemons and citrons, plums, pears, apples, apricots, carob, banana, mulberry, walnut, sycamore, grapes, olives, figs, peaches and pomegranates, to trees like the tamarisk, willow, china tree, cypress, *cordia myxa*, Christ's thorn – which were used either for wood or to make coal, or simply to beautify the countryside – and tobacco.⁶⁸ Every canal that was dug had trees planted on either side.⁶⁹ Flowers of every kind were also imported, for the *wali* was fond of beautiful gardens. The majority of the fruits and vegetables that Egyptians eat today were introduced by Muhammad Ali. Sami claims that between 1244 and 1246, i.e., 1828/9-1830/1, some 4,339,409 trees were planted.⁷⁰

Such improvements in agriculture were accompanied by government monopolies of all money-making commodities. The first monopoly on grain had been followed by monopolies of other export items such as rice, green peas, chick peas, fenugreek, flax, sesame, carthame, indigo and cotton. Some of the edibles were monopolized to feed the army in the Hijaz, but the rest went to the export market. The fallahin were told what crops to plant, in what quantity and over what areas, and scribes kept books to make sure that the orders were obeyed. That policy never wholly succeeded, but it was indicative of the government's tendency to establish central state control over all the resources of the country.⁷¹ To increase the country's productivity, large capital outlay was necessary, and that could be procured with ease through the monopoly system, so that monopolies became a state necessity. Drovetti explained to his superiors that the *wali* made a virtue out of necessity: when specie was short in the country he accepted taxes in kind, and could thus export grain and other crops, a move that was dear to the heart of what Drovetti called the 'philanthropic economists'.

Storage houses for grains were built. The army was increased and set to patrol the roads and highways. Public security was established and allowed the free movement of supplies in the country, which facilitated the export movement out of the country.⁷² Missett concurred in these improvements and mentioned the 'complete personal security' that was prevalent at the time in Egypt, in contrast to other parts of the Ottoman empire.⁷³ Salt was more emphatic: 'we owe so much to His Highness for

the extraordinary tranquillity and security of person that prevails throughout Egypt'.⁷⁴

The extension of irrigation canals allowed for more areas to be planted with cotton, rice and flax. Cotton and rice netted 450 pts. per faddan while flax netted 400 pts., though one must keep in mind that prices and profits fluctuated from one year to the other.⁷⁵ A category described as 'various other' netted 400–500 pts. That was most probably areas planted with vegetables and market produce round the cities. The same source gives the following figures for the Said: 400 pts. for flax, 500 pts. for indigo and opium and 1,000 pts. for sugar. Wheat, barley, clover, beans and *dura* all netted 100 pts. per faddan. Sugar, cotton, rice, indigo and opium were all grown on irrigated land. These were crops that had been grown in limited quantities prior to *saifi* irrigation, and had benefited the most from the irrigation projects while also yielding the highest profits and demanding the greatest capital outlay.

In mamluk days rice had been grown in the region of Damietta, Rashid and Manzala, i.e., the regions to the north of Damanhur and Mansura, and manifested an early form of export capitalist activity since the merchants exporting rice financed its production in the region. Girard in the *Description de l'Égypte* commented that the rice farms seemed to be exploited in a manner similar to that in Europe, where the cultivators hired workers seasonally to help with the harvest and invested in canal maintenance, *saqiyas* and cattle to turn them. Rice was mainly exported to the Ottoman empire, where it was considered a luxury item. There was an embargo on the export of rice outside the empire, but that was sometimes broken.⁷⁶ In 1791–8, at a time when production in Egypt was particularly low for the reasons mentioned earlier, the export of rice came to 28,000 ardabs according to Girard, and to 47,000 according to Chabrol;⁷⁷ this roughly constituted an acreage of 6,000 to 7,000 faddans at the rate of 5 ardabs per faddan. The value of the exports came to 53,920,000 paras or 1,323,000 pts., or at 47 pts. per ardab, if we accept the figures offered by Girard, 40,000 kila of rice were sent yearly to the Porte as part of Egypt's tribute.⁷⁸ The export of rice was not new to Muhammad Ali, but he increased the rice-growing areas by irrigation projects and financed a larger production of the lucrative crop. From Damietta, where three fifths of all the governorate grew rice,⁷⁹ the crop expanded into the neighbouring provinces of Gharbiyya and Daqahliyya, which became major rice-producing areas and benefited from the Duwaida and Buhiyya canals, each 500 kms long, the Mansuriyya, 350 kms and the Sharqawiyya, 400 kms, all in the province of Mansura or Daqahliyya, as it was later

named. Gharbiyya province acquired three new canals with a total of 1,790 kms. The rest of the Delta provinces which had acquired *saifi* canals turned to rice and cotton production, while Sharqiyya became the main cotton-producing area. A total of nearly 98,000 faddans were now allocated to rice, and rice was sold at 125 pts. the ardab.⁸⁰

Cotton production had also been a lucrative commodity in the eighteenth century, but Egypt, which grew short staple cotton, never had enough of the raw material to satisfy local demands and had to import much raw cotton from Syria and Palestine. Demand for cotton on the part of France in large measure and on the part of Egypt in a minor fashion had stimulated the rise of notables like Jazzar Ahmad and Dhahir al-Umar, who created independent enclaves out of their territories in order to fulfil the demand for cotton production and its export.⁸¹

Muhammad Ali, in trying to increase the profit to be made out of cotton, turned to industry and the production of cotton textiles. Through a stroke of good fortune, a new strain of long staple cotton, later called Jumel cotton, was found to grow well in Egypt. Unlike the short staple kind, the long staple variety necessitated irrigation. Irrigation and the canal network were necessary to increase cotton production and consequent cotton exportation. Jumel, which was discovered in 1820, was first grown in the province of Sharqiyya where Ibrahim Pasha had an estate. Muhammad Ali asked his son to experiment with the new crop, given the strength of Sharqiyya soil and the skill of its fallahin. The fallahin of Sharqiyya were no more skilled than fallahin elsewhere, but as Ibrahim had estates there he could supervise the growth of the new crop closely. Muhammad Ali explained that the advantage of the new crop was that *rumi* cotton – the old variety – was selling at 90 pts. the qantar, while the new cotton was selling at 300 pts.⁸² Once the cotton plant was successfully grown, the acreage sown with cotton expanded.

Cotton demands a great deal of service, unlike wheat, *dura*, or barley. It needs to be watered every 12 days and the plants are at their best for two years, production diminishing after the second and third year when the plants have to be uprooted and new ones sown. At the beginning the fallahin were well paid for the cotton, getting \$16 per qantar when the dollar was worth 12.5 pts., so that a qantar made 200 pts., and the average faddan netted 400–500 pts., depending on the crop and the richness of the soil. In 1824 cotton sold at \$17, earning 12.5 pt. more per qantar. In 1828 the crop reached 59,200 qantars and sold at \$13.⁸³ The price of cotton was to drop further in the 1830s when it sold for \$10, when the dollar was worth 16–17 pts. As long as cotton sold well it was a popular crop with fallah and landowner alike. Cotton demanded an initial financial outlay both in

sowing and harvesting the crop. The administration was prepared to provide credit to the fallahin, but the common cultivator who worked as a field hand resented the extra labour he was forced to expend on the crop, especially when the price of cotton dropped. Then the fallahin resorted to acts of sabotage; they uprooted the plants, and neglected the crop so that it died or gave a poor yield, to discourage cotton production. Three years later the price of cotton rose to \$15 when the dollar was worth 20 pts., thus giving 300 pts. per qantar or 600–700 pts. per faddan.⁸⁴ In 1844, when the crop reached 153,363 qantars, it sold at an average of \$18.⁸⁵ Cotton eventually became a popular crop even among the poorest cultivators, but that was in the days of Ismail when the market was free and the price of cotton was not fixed by the government as under Muhammad Ali.

Under Muhammad Ali cotton remained an unpopular crop among the fallahin, although a popular one among the landowners and the shaikhs and *umad* who could afford to finance the crop, have the cotton properly cleaned, and who supervised the classification of the crop so they were not cheated by the government agents who wrongly classified the cotton in order to pay the fallah less than his due.

The fallah generally preferred to plant cereals which were less demanding in terms of manpower and which yielded a decent profit any year. After the irrigation works had been started cereal production rose by three or four times its level twenty years earlier, even though by 1840 Egypt was exporting to England alone ten times more cotton than cereals.⁸⁶ By then well over half-a-million faddans in the Delta were watered by summer irrigation and fields were yielding 2 and 3 crops a year. Dura, the most popular crop among the fallahin since it was the staple diet, was cropped several times a year.

The most lucrative crop in the land was sugar, which was grown in limited quantities in Middle Egypt. Egypt had always exported sugar to the Ottoman empire. Part of the *irsaliyya*, or tribute, was 20,000 okes of fine sugar and 30,000 sugar loaves.⁸⁷ In 1834/1250 Ibrahim Pasha demanded 1,000 faddans in Middle Egypt, in Malawi, Dairut and Dair al-Baramun, to grow sugar.⁸⁸ That crop demanded a greater capital outlay than any other crop, for the canes produced only after a number of years and needed manpower to harvest the crop, unlike cotton which was harvested by women and children who were unpaid labour on their own land, or were paid a pittance. Sugar-cane on the other hand could only be harvested by men. Ibrahim's experiment was so successful that in 1849/1266, 5,040 faddans were allocated in the region of Dair al-Baramun⁸⁹ to feed a sugar factory that had been set up in the region in 1818/1234, and which was now producing more sugar. A further 2,500 faddans every year were supposed to be turned over to sugar.⁹⁰

Muhammad Ali's government closely supervised the new crops and supplied the cultivators with seed when necessary, that is, when the crop had been damaged, or in times of crisis like flood or drought. In 1830/1246⁹¹ government officials informed the administration of the need for 193,663 ardabs of grain as seeds for 819,825 faddans in the Delta, for the fallahin did not have the seeds. The fallah paid the cost of the seeds out of the new harvest, but at least was sure of a crop.

In order to increase productivity and encourage the cultivation of untilled soil the administration thought of new ways and incentives. In 1826 untilled land (*bur* or *ibadiyya*) was offered as tax-free land (*rizqa bila mal*), or it was specified that the *mal* be paid after a few years when the land had been serviced and could produce crops. Such grants, which were supposed to have come into being first in 1829, were in fact created much earlier. Professor Barakat has found a register for such grants dated 1826-7.⁹² Most of these grants went to high officials, who had the funds to spend on the land for the requisite number of years until it yielded a benefit. Some of the lands were also given to ordinary fallahin (*anfar*). Fallahin of some regions joined together and requested that they be accorded *ibadiyya* lands; these were tax exempt for three years, a tax being imposed the fourth year at 15 riyals per faddan. Records show that shaikhs and fallahin who requested they be allowed to work the land ('*mashayikh wa-l fallahin talibin li ziraatiha*')⁹³ were granted these lands, as were bedouin chiefs who had long been sedentarized such as the Abaza, Sultan and al-Basil families. By 1837 usufruct of *ibadiyyat* became inheritable, and years later full ownership of these lands was decreed. Though generally benefiting the elite, the *ibadiyyat* also contributed towards creating an exiguous native landowning class, which was a beginning for Egyptian ownership of land.

After the collapse of the wars of expansion in 1840, and the pressure which England brought to bear to rescind the policies of monopoly (see chapters 9 and 10), the pasha resorted to a new form of land tenure known as *uhda*. *Uhad* strongly resembled the old *iltizam* system. The first such grants had been set up in 1836, and perhaps even earlier as a response to financial needs. The years from 1832 onwards had been bad years in terms of Nile floods. Two years of a low Nile and drought were followed by one good year in 1834, then by a disastrous drought and an epidemic that carried off an estimated 500,000 people. This was succeeded by a weak flood in 1836, a drought and a famine in 1837. Simultaneously with all these natural disasters, the country was fighting the Ottomans in Syria throughout 1831-3 and needed funds to pay the army and to pay the forces of occupation in Syria. Funds were at their lowest ebb. The administration, in search of revenue, thought of a

scheme whereby the land tax would be paid in spite of the droughts, the epidemics and the famines, and without placing a burden too heavy to bear on the fallahin. That scheme was to make the rich administrators, army generals, or members of the royal family disgorge some of their wealth by forcing them to take over the tax liabilities of villages which were in arrears. Affluent *umad* and shaikhs who in the past had volunteered to pay the tax liabilities of land and guarantee its future taxes had been granted that land as an *uhda*. The procedure was now extended to the more affluent members of the elite. The *mutaahid*, or possessor of an *uhda*, was to allow the fallahin the right to cultivate their *athariyya* lands, so they were not being dispossessed, but he was also expected to hire day labourers to cultivate the balance of the land that may have been left fallow or was uncultivated. The fallahin paid the *mutaahid* the land tax (*miri*), and he had to make up the remainder of the tax imposed on the *uhda* out of his own pocket. The *mutaahid* could not legally use corvée labour nor impose any extra taxes on the fallahin as had been customary in *iltizam* days, so that in theory his authority was sharply curtailed. His profit was derived from the cultivation of the fallow lands in the *uhda*, somewhat akin to *usya* land. However, once the fallow land was brought under cultivation it was to be restored to the fallahin.⁹⁴ In the short run the *mutaahid* was to bear the expense of the land and share in some of the profit, but in the long run the land was to revert to the fallah. When Muhammad Ali died, that system was changed and those who held lands as *uhda* kept them and cut out the fallah.

The earliest *uhda* document I have seen dated from 1252/1836 and in it the *shaikh al-balad* of al-Qasba requested that he be allocated lands as *uhda* and that the district be granted to him ('*talaba mina an yata ahad bil bilad wa yaltamis an tuhal al-nahiya ala uhdatihi*'). When towards the end of the decade, with the second Syrian campaign, the need for money became more pressing, bureaucrats and officers were forced to take on *uhad* which had previously been offered on a voluntary basis. *Uhad* were traded for pensions, and by 1844 nearly one million faddans had been distributed under that system.

The fallahin liked the *uhda* system for it allowed them exemption from corvée duties, and they were protected by the *mutaahid* from the bureaucracy and from neighbouring landowners, even when they were being exploited by him. Under the reign of Abbas, much *uhda* land was confiscated because the owners were in arrears of taxation. By 1858 solvent *uhda* became private property.

Cafalik, or grants of land to members of the royal family, at first were supervised by village shaikhs appointed as salaried supervisors ('*nuzzar*

min umad al-mashayikh') over the *cafalik* in 1834/1250. They were paid a salary of 1250 pts. a month for their supervisory activities. Two years later the *cafalik* were divided into parcels of 10–50 faddans and offered to whoever wished to till them and pay the land tax. Those who had children were given preference, for their offspring would provide extra, unpaid labour. The division of *cafalik* among the fallahin, rather than the previous custom of hiring *nuzzar* to supervise the land and fallahin to till the soil through corvée or as hired workers, seemed a more lucrative way of running the land. It also gave the land back to the fallah as tenant, rather than as a day labourer. That step may have been motivated by a lack of working hands, which was a problem at that time since there was more land available than men to work it, and may equally have been motivated by a need for more money, cutting out the salaried middleman or *nazir*.

The *wali* and his government up to that time had followed a policy that was designed to cut out as many intermediaries and retain as much of the surplus from the land as possible as a means of capital accumulation. That capital was then expended in public works, in increasing the area of production, and in importing and perfecting new kinds of money-making crops. The funds were also used to finance industry and the military, as well as expended on luxuries for the elite. In order to ensure the smooth working of the administration, the supporters of the state were rewarded by grants of land. These grants were not grants of ownership but merely of usufructuary rights. However, by 1840–1 the *wali* was faced with a power struggle internally and consequently was forced to change his policy. The consuls even mention concern over the stability of the regime. Throughout that period there are rumours of change in the administration, of a pro-Turk and pro-fallah faction, of differences of opinion between the *wali* and his son Ibrahim.⁹⁶ It is not inconceivable that, after the defeat in Syria (see chapter 10), the *wali*, involved in negotiations with the Ottomans over the terms of his rule in Egypt, the number of the men in the army, the amount of the tribute, etc., sought to win the favour of the elite. The elite, realizing their potential bargaining power at that moment in time, pushed for full recognition of their rights, and managed to transform usufructuary rights into full ownership. The *wali*, wooing *de facto* landowners, was forced to make them *de jure* landowners by passing a law that turned *ibadiyyat* and *cafalik* into private property. The rural elite, being a necessary adjunct to that plan, was restored as an intermediary class of landowners ready to offer the *wali* their political support and become a revenue base for the state along with the latifundists by being made responsible for paying the taxes.

Once the administration accepted the terms of the Ottomans, it was forced to dismantle its monopolies according to the terms of the treaty of Balta Liman signed between the Ottoman empire and England in 1838. The *wali* still sought to sidetrack the terms of that treaty by enjoining the latifundists to refuse sales to private, that is western, merchants and to sell their crops only to the government. At first the latifundists, grateful for their new-found rights over the land, obeyed, but later they rebelled at the system of indirect monopoly imposed on them by the government and sought to sell their products on the open market where they could get higher prices.⁹⁷ Because they now owned the land legally, the administration could do little to stop them, especially when the first to rebel against the system were members of the *wali*'s family and household.

By 1845 the largest landowners in the land were the *wali* and his family, who owned 18.8 per cent of the land, a pattern that continued and intensified until the revolution of 1952. The second largest land-owning group were the government employees, the bureaucrats, the Turco-Circassian elite such as the Minastirli, Daramanli, Topuzade, Manikli families and a smattering of high Egyptian officials, among whom were Rifaa Rafi al-Tahtawi, Ali Mubarak, Nabarawi and some Copts, Muallim Ghali Sargios and his sons. A third group comprised the rural gentry, or *ayan*, like the Foda, and tribal bedouin chiefs, the Abaza, Sultan and Abu Stait.⁹⁸

To summarize the changes that took place in the rural milieu as a consequence of the reign of Muhammad Ali and his policies, one needs to underline the continuity with some mamluk practices that survived or that resurfaced. Taxes were collected more rationally and were unified, which cut down on the gratuitous exploitation of the fallah by a number of different groups and substituted the exploitation by the government apparatus. New and alternative methods of production to increase the wealth of the state were established at the expense of the middlemen, who were pressed into the service of the state or who lost their functions. A new popular rural group from among the petty notables and the gentry was encouraged to become a government tool in rationalizing agriculture for export, a tool that allowed the government to exert greater control over the land. At the same time, the land base was to become the first native landowning group in the country.

Land exploitation was improved through public works, the introduction of new crops and improved agricultural habits. Changes in the administrative apparatus sought to protect the fallah from the caprice of the bureaucracy and to organize the bureaucracy more efficiently. While the rate of success in all these plans was not consistently high – the bureaucracy, for instance, continued to be capricious and inefficient –

yet it was less arbitrary than under previous regimes, for it had to contend with a centralized hierarchy and the watchful eye of the *wali*. He believed 'One must guide this people as one guides children; to leave them to their own devices would be to render them subject to all the disorders from which I have saved them and into which they would fall the minute I ceased to guide them.'⁹⁹

To Egyptians the most important aspect of these policies was that it encouraged the latifundia to grow at the expense of the fallah. For where the fallah in mamluk days had the tenancy (*hiyaza*) of the land, under the new regime he lost that right to the land, which had become the *mulk*, the property of the elite. Some may argue that that trend was inevitable, and that the latifundia were bound to gobble up the small property owners in time. The second and more important point was that these policies brought the native Egyptians into the elite, not as middlemen or as intermediaries by virtue of their religious office, as they had been in the past as *tujjar* and *ulama*, but as part of the administration, as a cog in the machinery of the bureaucracy. This was a first step in the process of turning Egypt into a state, which, while it remained part of the Ottoman empire, was to all intents and purposes an independent entity with its own national character that differed from the Ottoman nature of the empire. The process of Egyptianization had begun, and was to continue until 1882 when the first national Egyptian revolution broke out against the Turco-Circassian ruler. *Awlad al-balad*, sons of the land, as the Egyptians called themselves, or *awlad al-Arab*, sons of the Arabs, as the Turco-Circassian elite referred to the native Egyptians, were, by the establishment of a state apparatus, becoming incorporated into a nation state of their own before they were even aware of a self-identity in national terms.

Industry and commerce

Dependence on the Nile river, while yielding admirable results in good years, was, alas, a dependence on whimsical or capricious nature, which through floods and droughts, good years and indifferent years showed man how little he controlled his river, and how much lay at the mercy of nature's forces when he was buffeted by catastrophe in bad years. Muhammad Ali was too practical a man to trust wholly to the caprice of nature, and tried to harness the river with the technology of his day. Oriented as he was towards trade and commerce, he must needs develop manufactures in order to have a favourable balance of trade: two planks in the edifice of mercantilist thought. Diversification of investment into industry, trade and commerce was imperative. These were fields that Muhammad Ali understood even better than he did agriculture.

Egypt had always been a cotton-textile exporting country, although it had its ups and downs. It had imported all its raw silk and some of its cotton from Syria. In return Egypt paid for these imports by exporting rice and cereals to the area, and some textiles. Egypt had also exported textiles to France in the early part of the eighteenth century. By the end of the century that market had contracted for various reasons we have already referred to, not least of which may have been the death of textile workers from the plague that ravaged the land by the end of the century.

Throughout the eighteenth century we notice struggles for power among various Ottoman governors and notables in the Balkans as well as in the Arab provinces, each one seeking to wrest a quasi-autonomy for his region, to establish a centralized form of government, and to increase export, all of which were interdependent. That phenomenon most certainly arose in response to a demand from Europe for increased commercial activity, one which could come about through centralization of authority and a monopoly over the regions. The 'pull' from Europe was answered by a 'push' from the Mediterranean area. That push came when internal conditions allowed for an accumulation of resources, that is, when a means to prevent surplus from being siphoned off to the imperial capital was found. Such a situation explained the struggles for

power on the part of the governors and their attempts to break away from the deadly suction imposed by the needs of the capital city and its government which also sought to centralize authority. Increased centralization in local governments was necessary in order to hasten rationalization of agriculture towards the production of cash crops and the export market instead of waiting for the market forces to operate. At that time we note the creation of links between the local Christian merchants and European merchants, and the rise in power and influence of Syrian Christian merchants.¹ Simultaneously we note an increase in arms, in the use of mercenaries and warships among the leaders of the regions. That one factor also necessitated a search for increased revenues on the part of the local rulers and partly accounted for their need to export more. Why such an increase in weaponry and more expensive methods of warfare appeared at that specific time is uncertain. Rising technology in Europe may have led the merchants to sell more sophisticated weapons to the local rulers, and also indicate to them how they could pay for the arms – by increased production and export.

Jazzar in Acre, Dhahir in Galilee, Ali Bey in Egypt, all responded to such pressures for export. Muhammad Ali in Kavala may also have felt the pressures, for Kavala was on the way to Thessaloniki, a major port in the Mediterranean trade and one which exported the cotton production of that hinterland. He may well have sought to continue that trend towards export in Egypt, hence his links with a number of Syrian Christian merchants, some of whom were also European consuls, and his links with the Greek merchants, whom he invited to settle in Egypt and who became his agents.

The response of the Ottoman government to these movements towards autonomy was to strengthen her naval power after 1770 in order to gain control over trade and over her provinces at one and the same time. Both Jazzar and Ali Bey had also acquired fleets in order to expand their trade and combat piracy, revealing a distinct trend not only towards export outside the empire but also towards greater independence vis-à-vis the Ottoman authorities. The Ottoman authorities tried to crush the challengers to their hegemony when they could, by using Jazzar to put down Dhahir, and Abu-l Dhahab Bey to put down Ali Bey, thereby diminishing the number of their opponents, even though the tools they used continued to remain autonomous.

Muhammad Ali was familiar with the commercial conditions of the eastern Mediterranean and sought to capitalize on trade with Egyptian products. Logically or instinctively he realized that the quickest means to carry out a successful large-scale economic enterprise was to centralize authority, which became a first priority, as we have seen, and was

indeed the first lesson in any mercantilist book. Mercantilists believed the state must control and direct the flow of commerce, that agriculture and industry must be encouraged, and import trade controlled and limited to those commodities necessary for creating an infrastructure, as long as the imports allowed a favourable balance of trade. Ali Bey al-Kabir had espoused the same principles, as we have shown, but with less success than Muhammad Ali.

One of the basic nails in Muhammad Ali's mercantilist procedures was as yet lacking, notably industrialization in Egypt, a lack he rapidly sought to remedy. The first large workshops that were set up were war-related ones. Ships were needed to carry soldiers to Upper Egypt to fight the mamluks, and then later to carry cereal to the Mediterranean ports from the hinterland. There again the *wali* learned from his mamluk predecessors. They had acquired armed ships and a merchant marine in order to protect their shores from pirates, defend their shipping and expand their trade and commercial links, to say nothing of moving their troops expeditiously, though they may not have succeeded in all these purposes. Murad Bey the duumvir had hired three brothers from Zante, who converted to Islam and established a cannon-foundry and a fleet of river boats which patrolled the Nile. The largest of these boats carried 24 cannon and was manned by Greeks, as indeed were most of the other ships. The captains commanding the ships were also Greek.² Muhammad Ali went farther than the mamluks, and in 1805 and 1807 his army was seconded by gunboats³ when it fought the mamluks. He was said to have used a squadron of six gunboats and 800 transport ships.⁴ These were ships built by the mamluks, but he soon increased their number.

The British invasion of 1807 had shown him how vulnerable the Egyptian coastline was and led him to develop a navy. The war in the Hijaz forced him to expand his fleet. The first ship in his new fleet was a frigate, the *Africa*, which was found unfinished in the arsenal at Alexandria. In 1807 it was sent to England to have its hull lined with copper and outfitted with thirty guns. Work on the Red Sea flotilla began in 1809, and eighteen ships varying in weight between 100 and 150 tons were built in the Bulaq arsenal and carried in pieces on camel back to Suez where they were put together by 1811.⁵ Other ships necessary for the Hijaz expedition were chartered from the sultan of Masqat. Ship-building after 1829 was carried out in two major ship-yards, the first and older one in Bulaq, and a larger and newer one in Alexandria which was expanded to build an entire fleet to compensate for the one lost in the battle of Navarino.

Commercial interests led to the expansion of a merchant marine.

Ismail Jabal Tariq, the *wali*'s agent and admiral, was sent on board the *Africa* to try to buy ships from England. When these were refused him, the *wali* encouraged his friends and relations to invest in arms and shipping for him. His Greek agents, Tossizza and Anastasi, built three ships in 1818 which traded in the waters of the Greek archipelago. The *wali* bought an American brig and three merchant ships and sent them off on the grain trade. They returned laden with arms and ammunition for the Hijaz campaign.⁶ Other agents stationed in Malta, Livorno, Trieste, Genoa and Marseille drummed up trade for Egypt and in turn bought up arms and ammunition.

One of the basic rules of mercantilist thought was to ship on local shipping, as the west had so successfully done. Muhammad Ali followed that policy. Having been raised in a port city and been a merchant for ten years, he was familiar with the need for shipping cargo, arming ships and beating other ships to the ports. While he knew that his own fleet could not rival that of the European powers, he hoped to make it the strongest fleet in the eastern Mediterranean, and to carve out the lion's share of trade. This trade, up to this point, had been in the hands of Greek shippers. When the British fleet under Lord Nelson had blockaded and sunk the French fleet in the Bay of Abuqir, the once all-powerful French shippers who had dominated the Mediterranean had temporarily disappeared from the sea lanes, and their place had been taken by Greek ships and Ottoman craft. Muhammad Ali saw an opportunity for displacing such rivals by his marine. Although his captains were Greeks from the islands, his 'admirals' were Albanians from Kavala, like Muharram Bey his son-in-law, Ma'ush Bey the commander of the fleet, and Ismail Jabal Tariq Bey.

The Hijaz campaign also necessitated the establishment of ammunition, gun-powder and arms manufactories. In 1810 news of the Egyptian workshops turning out such items leaked to the Porte, which sent a *firman* warning the *wali* that it was forbidden to set up workshops (*wurash*) for making bullets and shot (*rusas wa rash*), for the Ottomans had a monopoly on the manufacture of such items with two workshops, one in Uskudar and one in Izmir.⁷ The monopoly and the Ottoman directives went the way of all other orders from the Porte which displeased the *wali*, and further workshops were set up and expanded. In 1815 a gunpowder factory was set up on Roda Island, which extracted saltpetre as 'white as that of the English' and a cannon foundry, the Tophane, was created in the Citadel.⁸

A whole ensemble of new industries relating to the army was set up providing a typical example of a military industrial complex of arsenals, shipyards, factories, hospitals and schools. To begin with, ammunition

was bought abroad from England, France, Belgium, etc. This procedure proved too slow for the *wali*'s needs, for goods had to be sold in order to provide the cash with which to buy the supplies. For example, Boghos sent an order to his brother in Trieste to sell 3,000 qantars of cotton and buy guns with the proceeds.⁹ At times the countries involved refused to sell the necessary arms. As soon as guns, rifles, cannon and bullets were bought, they were immediately copied to avoid having to return to the European sources. The fact that Egypt possessed neither coal nor iron presented a major obstacle to the manufacture of ammunition, for all the raw materials had to be imported. The Sudan campaign was therefore designed not only to find slaves for the army but to search for minerals, ('*al bahth amma yakun fiha min maadin*').¹⁰ The Morean campaign in turn led to an increase in shipbuilding. By then the military establishments could call on the following factories: a complex of works in the Citadel which produced 3-4 cannon a month and was the nucleus of heavy industry, a musket factory producing over 625 muskets, various kinds of hardware like swords, lances, etc., a munitions factory for the production of cannon ball, gunpowder, bullets, etc.

The second military industrial complex was the Tirsane in Bulaq, and this produced small arms, cannon casting and copper lining for ships. Six gunpowder factories were set up in various parts of Egypt, and the natron lakes in the western desert yielded chemicals of fine quality easily.¹¹ Another gun factory in Hod al-Marsud supplied 800 muskets a month.

The need to pay for imported weaponry and machinery led to further developments. At first the grain sales abroad had provided ample funds to pay for any imports, but after 1813, when the grain sales had diminished, new trading commodities were necessary. Throughout that period the British merchants who bought grain from Egypt stepped up their exports to Egypt in order to pay for the grain, and flooded the country with cheap cotton textiles known as 'Indian muslins'. The influx of such stuffs had caused a number of local workshops or *fabriques* to close down when they could not compete with the cheaper British goods. Drovetti reported, 'the article of [British] manufacture which is the most widespread in Egypt is the cotton cloth called Indian, which the Egyptians use to make their jackets, their turbans, and for household furnishings ... several of their [Egyptian] factories have ceased all work'.¹² Meanwhile, he bemoaned the fact that French stuffs could not be exported to the Levant by sea because of the British blockades. He regretted the time when cheap Indian stuffs replaced expensive French products, and harked back to mamluk days. He claimed that because the pasha wanted to save money only his household and those of his sons and the officers of the court

bought expensive materials. Drovetti's venom against the English made him write, 'England, enemy of all which could have contributed towards reviving the old commercial prosperity of Egypt'.¹³ How such prosperity could be achieved by importing expensive French goods rather than British ones is not explained.

The consequent collapse of Egyptian workshops showed Muhammad Ali the need for reorganizing textile production and for placing an embargo on British textiles to prevent them from swamping the market or 'dumping' their cheap cloth. By such means the *wali* hoped, to quote Drovetti, 'this country would have the least possible need for foreign products and that it would become capable of supplying such products to its neighbours'.¹⁴

Muhammad Ali used old hands to set up his projects and especially from among those familiar with that particular commodity. The first group he used were the Syrian Christian merchants, such as the Bocti family. This family had come to Egypt during the last century, and while one brother settled in Alexandria, one settled in Damietta, two went to Cairo and one brother to Livorno.¹⁵ The descendant of one of the brothers, Joseph Bocti, became Swedish consul and built the silk factory at Khoronfish. Joseph developed trading relations between Egypt and Sweden, Egyptian grain being sold in return for pig-iron. Swedish ships were chartered to carry Egyptian grain abroad. Bocti also set up the cotton factories. Syrian Christian merchants were the obvious choice for Muhammad Ali because they had controlled the import of European textiles and 'the resale of cloth'¹⁶ as well as dominated the import and export market to Europe. Another Syrian Christian established in Egypt was Basile Farazli who became the *wali*'s agent in Marseille.¹⁷ Of the Greek merchants who settled in Egypt in 1811, the most prominent were the Anastasi, Casulli, Zizinia and Tossizza families. Tossizza was made director of a glass factory and later became Greek consul to Egypt.¹⁸ Zizinia bought and outfitted a ship to expand the *wali*'s merchant navy, and provided him with his first frigates. A number of Greeks from the islands became the captains of the new fleet and some of them converted to Islam.¹⁹ From 1812, ships bearing Greek labourers and tradesmen came yearly from Hydra and Spezia.²⁰

Muhammad Ali had agents in France, England, Malta, Izmir, Tunis, Naples, Venice, Yemen and India. From 1816 the *wali* had offered 1,500,000 riyals to anyone who would undertake to organize trade with India. Mahruqi, Briggs and the *wali*'s Italian physician, Bausani, accepted the offer and set up trading links with India.²¹ These agents allegedly earned one third the profits as their share, which, if true, explained their loyalty and support.²²

Amongst the other Europeans the *wali* used was the French consul Drovetti and the English merchant Samuel Briggs, both of whom encouraged trade between their respective countries and Egypt. England had the edge, for it dominated the sea and carried off the giant's share of trade. After 1815 a number of Frenchmen, formerly employed in the army or with Bonapartist feelings, rushed to Egypt in search of a livelihood, and there they were hired to teach the Egyptians technology, to train the army on western lines, to direct and set up factories. The list of Frenchmen employed in Egypt is a well-known one for the west has long credited them with the modernization of Egypt. As far as the Egyptian ruler was concerned, these men were tools in his hand: they were in Egypt to perform a function, to teach his bureaucrats their knowledge, and once that was done he wished to dispense with them, for he did not trust them to look after his interests in the same way as his retainers would, especially as many of them were 'job hunters and adventurers'.²³ Egyptians were placed in secondary positions of command, and were groomed to take over from the foreigners. At first Muhammad Ali refused to believe that Egyptians could be anything but fallahin or industrial workers, so that the first group of students sent to study abroad were Turks like Uthman Nur al-Din, who in 1809 was sent to Pisa and Livorno, on Bocti's suggestion, to study military science, ship-building, printing and engineering.²⁴ But in 1815, an Egyptian, Husain Shalabi Ajwa, invented a machine for hulling rice that made the task much simpler. The *wali* was impressed and said, 'The Egyptians seem to have an aptitude for sciences',²⁵ and ordered that a number of Egyptians and some of his mamluks be gathered in a school which was named the Muhandiskhana, the school for engineering. There they were taught by several Europeans. This may have been the first of a series of schools. In 1828 ten Egyptians were sent to Europe to learn mechanics.²⁶ In 1831 the schools of cavalry, artillery, infantry and naval sciences were created. Technical schools for war munitions, mineralogy, engineering, applied chemistry, signalling arts and crafts, irrigation, translation, agriculture, languages, medicine, pharmaceuticals, maternity and veterinary medicine were founded.²⁷

Other than war-related industries, minor industries were first set up with a soap factory in 1815. That factory was tied in with an agricultural venture, for the *wali* had ordered an experimental area known as Ras al-Wadi, near Bilbais, to be outfitted with *sawaqi* and be made to grow mulberry trees for silk-worm production, and olive trees for the extraction of oil. One thousand *sawaqi* were ordered for the region, and a soap factory 'along Syrian lines' and oil presses, to extract olive oil as well as use some of it for soap, were started.²⁸

1815 was a year of industrial activity when establishments or factories

were set up for weaving cotton, jute and silk, as were establishments for building river barges ('amakin wa masani li nasj al-qatani ... min al-qutn wa-l harir wa kadhalik al junfis wa-l sandal').²⁹ All these products were monopolized, private looms were prohibited and workers drafted into the factories to weave on government looms.

The thrust of the industrialization projects was towards cotton production. Throughout the eighteenth century cloth had been the major artisan commodity exported from Egypt to the west. Linen and flax goods such as *minufi*, *batanuni*, *asiuti* and *shibini* from the Said, and cotton goods such as *dimity*, *ajami*, *mahallawi* from the Delta were all exported. Centres for weaving were in Mahalla, Rosetta, Fayyum, Damietta, Shibin and Cairo, although the capital was outdistanced by the provinces. Spinning and weaving of silk was, however, a Cairene speciality, although rural areas like Isna did weave silk as well. Wool was also spun and woven. The first commodities to become industrialized were obviously the ones with an export potential, if not towards Europe at least towards the Ottoman empire. Much of the cotton and all of the silk used in the past had been imported from Syria and Palestine, since Egyptian cotton, known as either *baladi* or *rumi*, was not grown in sufficient quantities for local needs. That fact inspired the *wali* to expand the area of cotton and try to grow mulberries and raise silkworms in Egypt in order to cut down on the importation of raw materials.

The new factories that Jabarti mentioned in 1816 were the first attempts at large-scale works, and were instituted in the hope of saving the industry, or salvaging it from collapse when the influx of British cottons from 1811 had caused the ruin of a number of establishments. The factories were at first manned by workers from abroad, and Jabarti mentioned 'artisans arriving from the land of the Franks' ('arbab al-sanai al-wasilun min bilad al-afraj'). He mentioned by name the various items of machinery that were found in the factories and added that they included 'machinery that was strange in composition and construction', ('al-alat al-gharibatu-l wad wa-l tarkib'), referring to machinery the likes of which he had never seen or heard of before for the weaving of cotton and silk.³⁰ These were references to equipment in the silk workshops that Bosti had been hired to manage, manned by silk workers imported from Italy and mentioned by Roussel as groups of seventeen workers with sixty more being expected.³¹ In 1817 Roussel commented, 'within a few years, the silk factories that are being established in Egypt will deal a deadly blow to those of Italy, and even ours'.³² He was then being over pessimistic regarding European production. Hydraulic machinery may have been part of the 'strange machin-

ery' that Jabarti mentioned, since in 1818 Roussel remarked on the advent of a hydraulic engineer, four blacksmiths, three women expert spinners in cotton, and a master swordsman accompanied by his wife.³³ Earlier on, Roussel somewhat condescendingly said that Muhammad Ali wished to 'establish factories in his country so that he could one day dispense with foreign products'. He continued, 'he flatters himself that he can manufacture cloth, silk stuffs and cottons.'³⁴ By the end of the year the early tone of condescension gave way to genuine concern and fear that Egypt might rival French production. The silk industry was not a great success, but Muhammad Ali did not give up and continued to try to cultivate silk in Egypt and to weave it. At a time when men were drafted into the army for the Syrian campaign, in 1832, a new statute gave silk workers dispensation from military service. Cotton, however, was soon considered a viable alternative to silk; Jumel, a textile engineer from Lyons, arrived in Egypt to direct a cotton factory built at Bulaq.

It is interesting to note that the impetus for cotton industrialization came, not after the discovery of long-staple cotton, as has been assumed, but before. From 1817-21, 33 per cent of the cards, 70 per cent of the looms and 24 per cent of the jennies were set up. There were 1,250 looms in the Cairo factories and in two other factories in Qaliub and in Mansura, 436 mule jennies and 584 cards. After long-staple cotton was discovered a further 550 looms were prepared from 1824 and the total of mule jennies became 1,962, and 1,194 cards spread out over 30 different establishments. The early establishments had been in the Delta where cotton was generally grown, but from 1827 onwards 9 mills were erected in Middle and Lower Egypt. Three bleaching establishments existed prior to 1819 in Shubra, Shihabiyya and in Mansura. These were supplemented in 1827 by 3 new ones in Miliij, Shibin al-Kum and Mahalla, and one more in Asiut, and by a cloth-printing factory. Boislecote in 1833 asserted the presence of 30 *fabriques*. Hekekyan in the 1840s confirmed the existence of 31 cotton factories which consumed '700 qantars of inferior cotton' and 'employed 20,000 workers'. Mustafa Fahmy, on the other hand, estimated that the factories used 13,163 qantars of cotton by 1830, which represented one fourth of the cotton crop; by the end of the decade 50,000 qantars were being used by the mills.³⁵ Thus we can assume that the various irrigation projects that were carried out in the country were aimed primarily at increasing the acreage of short-staple cotton. By the time that long staple, jumel, had been discovered, the irrigation network was already organized, which permitted a fairly rapid expansion of the new crop.

The Egyptian textile industry by the 1820s was protected by embargoes imposed by the government to militate against the import of

cheap British textiles which had flooded the market and competed with the Egyptian variety. Soon Egyptian cottons of the lower and middling kinds swept the local market, and were exported to the Red Sea, the Sudan, Syria and Anatolia once all these territories became part of the Egyptian empire. Only luxury cottons, silks and high-grade woollens were imported.

Muhammad Ali imported the new technology of the power loom, and in 1830 a British engineer set up steam engines for a weaving establishment in Shubra which had 150 looms, and one in Qalat al-Kabsh with 200 looms. Steam engines were also used in hulling rice in Rosetta and in the foundry at Bulaq. In 1847 the paper factory was also steam-powered.³⁶ Eventually, the cost of importing coal for the steam engines mitigated their usefulness and resulted in their neglect, as well as in a constant search for coal by the engineers hired by the *wali* for that purpose. The old-fashioned hand looms, however, continued to function successfully.

The expansion of cotton textiles came at a time of similar expansion in England, where the industrial revolution had arisen on the basis of that one commodity. The invention of the mule jenny had boosted spinning techniques, but weaving was still done on a hand loom until 1820 when the power loom was adopted, and power mills expanded rapidly. The immediate outcome of that expansion was a pressing need for new markets, or for expanded markets for British textiles, which by then formed half of all British exports, while raw cotton made up one fifth of its imports. As Hobsbawm pertinently remarked, the British balance of payments as well as British shipping and overseas trade depended on that single industry.³⁷

Roussel and the foreign experts and merchants in Egypt were worried about Egyptian competition with European products, as Roussel frankly admitted. Drovetti, on the other hand, sneered at 'this absurd project wanting to turn to manufacturing a nation whose major interests lie in agriculture'.³⁸ He reasoned that through industrialization the pasha would either produce cloth more expensively than the European variety because he would need foreign experts to oversee the mills, or he would rely on the natives who 'could only become imitators', and would never be any match for European competition which would find new methods to furnish 'the most beautiful at cheaper rates'. Drovetti conveniently forgot that all European cottons had copied 'oriental' designs, since they had few of their own, so that Europe had been the imitators, and that the most beautiful cottons had been the Indian variety, not the French or the British. Britain had to kill off Indian cottons because they were too competitive before she was able to expand her own cotton production.³⁹

Technology of the day was then fairly simple and could easily be copied and adopted by unsophisticated workers, as were the British mill hands and the Egyptian ones. Lastly, Drovetti failed to take into account the fact that both France and Britain had used protective tariffs to nurture their nascent industries, a fact which Muhammad Ali had noted, and copied by imposing embargoes to render his industries competitive. Unlike England, which did not possess the raw material and had to import it, Egypt did. Egypt also had cheap labour and a captive market. Drovetti and Roussel's remarks, as well as those of the other foreign consuls, could thus be discounted as inspired more by political fears of economic competition than by a feeling for the best interests of the Egyptian state.

Reports on the factories are frequently unreliable and contradictory. In 1839 Mengin reported that only nine looms of the Birkal factory were working. Four years later Colin saw the steam engines in the Bulaq factory lying unused while cattle propelled the looms. Yet in 1837 Duhamel reported that the machines at Bulaq were steam-propelled.⁴⁰ While one can accuse these reporters of bias against the new industries, which would explain their unreliable reports, one must take into account the possibility that they were just confused. After all, no one today would give much credence to accounts of eye-witnesses who visited a factory nor use them as authoritative reports had he had more concrete figures to go on. There may well have been temporary shutdowns in the mills because of wars, lack of animals, shortages of raw materials, low harvests, any one of a number of reasons. The steam-powered mills which were more difficult to maintain may also have had temporary periods of idleness, which did not necessarily mean that they had stopped working permanently. Muhammad Ali's own accounts had been disregarded by many scholars because they believed them to be boastful, which may or may not have been true. He at least had the figures of production available to him which were not available to the foreign consuls and observers. The *wali* had told Pueckler-Muskau that he had spent ten million dollars on his factories and that they had already yielded one million clear profit. Duhamel and Campbell denied any such profit and added that Muhammad Ali should destroy his factories and import everything from Europe. This made little economic sense for Egypt, but a lot for Europe who stood to gain from such an uneven exchange.

Even the military became instant experts in economics when it came to judging Egyptian industry, and General Belliard reported, 'Their linens cannot stand competition with ours; all these establishments are ruinous, but it is his [Muhammad Ali's] mania.' On the other hand,

another military man, Boisilecomte, gave a different account of the textile factories. He said,

The linen cloth factories not only satisfy the country's internal consumption, but supply an export commodity of some value. In 1833 they provided 1,000,000 pieces of narrow cloth in the range of 2.50 to 5 francs. Half was used up within the country, the other half was exported. These same factories produced 30,000 pieces of wide cloth in the range of 12 to 16 francs, and worth 450,000 francs, which in its totality represents one twelfth the value of our production.

He added that every piece of cloth brought in a net profit of 2 francs and that wide linens and cotton voile were beginning to be produced for export. Elsewhere he wrote, 'they have generally managed to satisfy local consumption and to produce commodities at the same price that the Europeans normally sell theirs on the market'.⁴¹

The budget for 1833 further gives a figure of 1,500,000 francs for receipts from sailcloth (*mansujat al-qulu*) and of 1,200,000 francs for silk textiles, which shows that some textiles produced a quick profit,⁴² even silk, which was supposed to be a failure. Had all the textiles been ruinous there would not have been such a commotion over them as there was. Drovetti in fact wrung his hands over the silk textiles for fear that they would 'deal a death blow to those from Italy and even to our own', so that his sneers and constant carping over textiles were indications that he feared their competition with French products rather than their failure in Egypt.

It has been said that the peak of industrial power was reached by the mid-1830s and declined after that,⁴³ that in 1837 there were 29 cotton factories in the country and that by 1840 only 15 factories remained. Pueckler-Muskau attributed that decrease in factories to war, plague and cholera, while Duhamel *et al.* claimed that the pasha had discovered that it was more profitable to put out the goods with entrepreneurs who used the government's mule jennies and looms. Rather than continue running the mills through direct government supervision, the government merely supplied the entrepreneurs with the raw materials and received the finished product.⁴⁴ By 1834 yarn and cloth could be produced by individuals on payment of a tax to the state. All of this merely tells us that Muhammad Ali had discovered that private incentives worked better than a nationalized administration, and that some of the profit was, in the long run, more profitable than trying to hog it all. It does not tell us either that the factories were worthless, or that the idea of industrialization had failed. It does tell us that the pasha had found a way of making more money out of the factories and textiles

by putting out. Had they been such a failure, no sane contractor would have undertaken the project.

Some of the misunderstandings on the part of scholars may have stemmed from reading too much into the reports of the consuls. For example, when Drovetti in July 1822 reported, 'Already a large factory destined to manufacture cloth has ceased work',⁴⁵ this was interpreted by one author to mean that the Bulaq factory had ceased production and that 'several factories stopped operating'.⁴⁶ This was patently incorrect, for the only factory that had closed down was one in Khoronfish that produced silk and had been reconverted to cotton production in 1818. From 1820 onwards more, not fewer, factories were created. Not one of Muhammad Ali's critics ever gave figures which supported the contention that the factories ran at a loss. While British consul Campbell said, 'Mehemet Aly would gain very much by destroying them [factories] and importing all manufactures from Europe',⁴⁷ Mimaut writing in 1830 to Prince Polignac, the foreign secretary, said that Egyptian exports were four times more considerable than their imports, and added that the monopolies were 'onerous' only to the exporters,⁴⁸ who could not make a profit because of government monopoly.

Although the goods manufactured in Egypt may have been of inferior quality compared to those manufactured in France and England – and that is by no means certain – nonetheless they had a vast market in Egypt and in the conquered territories of Hijaz, Sudan and later on of Syria. In 1831 when Egypt imported 140,000 pts. worth of linens, it also exported 1,587,775 pts. worth of linens to the Ottoman empire, Tuscany, Austria, Greece, and Malta. These were exported through the port of Alexandria, leaving one to wonder at similar exports from other ports which have gone undocumented as yet. On the other hand, 8,153,525 pts. worth of cotton goods were imported that year, probably because all the local cottons had gone into making uniforms for the army. In 1840 the imports of cotton cloth decreased by £61,160.⁴⁹

The picture that comes through regarding the imports of cotton was that after a period during which a massive influx of British cottons had ruined the local cotton production, no more cotton was imported by the 1820s. In 1831 some textiles were imported, but by 1838 the British consul was expressing his misgivings about Egyptian competition,⁵⁰ showing that the imports from Britain had been temporary.

Bowring wrote that Muhammad Ali had told him that he was setting up his factories in order 'to accustom the people to manufacture' more than for any immediate profit that was expected. He also justified his protective embargoes by pointing out that the same system was pursued in England and France. Bowring reported the *wali* to have said, 'You

[England] had your beginnings as I have, and they were as expensive to you as they are to me; I do not expect to begin with much success, but I shall succeed by and by.' That is hardly the speech of a man who was boastful regarding his achievements, but rather a sensible assessment, so that when the *wali* claimed some profits we may equally assume that it was unexaggerated. Bowring pointed out that cotton cloth was the only article which had injured British commercial exportation, since England no longer sends cotton cloth and Indian muslins to Egypt.⁵¹

Rivlin has alleged that the Egyptian industries were 'doomed' because of the 'weakness inherent' in Muhammad Ali's industrial policy, and gives as her reference one line in Puryear (quoting Cobden, who first emitted that opinion) and Fahmi who gave exactly the contrary opinion, yet she failed to demonstrate any inherent weakness in industry.⁵² Her arguments that the Egyptian managers were inadequately trained and corrupt and that the machinery was imported is not an argument. Inadequately trained men with time learn the ropes, and the machinery, imported and imitated in Egyptian workshops, was not all that complicated as machinery went. Equally, one can dismiss her remark that the Egyptian workers resisted work in the factories because they did not wish to become proletarianized, as though one opted to become a factory owner or a factory hand, or even had a choice. All workers have resisted working in factories, in England no less than in Egypt at the beginning of industrialization. Her valid argument is the one regarding lack of fuel, but fuel can be and was imported. Lack of fuel has never been a deterrent for industry – witness Japan, to give but one successful example. But there is another valid argument raised by Boisilecomte to account for any shortcomings in the new industries. He accused the British of indirectly undermining Egyptian industry, for their advisors had sent Egypt a profusion of 'incomplete machinery, defective, worn out, incapable of functioning and all paid for at the highest prices; it reached the point where one could see a system [designed] to stifle Egypt's nascent industry, if love of gain and individual cupidity did not suffice to explain all.'⁵³ Harsh words indeed, but, if true and not merely Anglophobia speaking, they might apply to some of the more elaborate machinery that some people described they had seen lying around unused. In brief, we have no concrete proof that the textiles failed, for the simple reason that they had not failed, but were indeed a most successful enterprise considering that it was one that dealt with new machinery and considering the natural opposition of workers to factories in general. The surprise lies not in that the factories cost the state sums of money, but in that they became working propositions so rapidly.

In 1841 the *wali* wrote instructing his inspector-general of factories to intensify production so as to meet the needs of the population fully and avoid any imports from abroad, with the consequent exodus of capital.⁵⁴ In that year he ordered that 5 per cent of the workers' pay be distributed to them as a premium over and above their wages. In the month of Rajab he ordered that 50 per cent of the gains (*arbah*) from the textiles be given the master craftsmen in order to stimulate competition amongst the textile workers and increase production.⁵⁵ These were hardly directives of a man who saw his industries going down the drain, or even operating at a loss.

Whatever else he may have done, Muhammad Ali did not throw money down the drain. He accepted the principle that he had to operate at a loss while the industry was in its infancy and until it had got on its feet, but had it continued to lose money he would have ruthlessly scrapped it. We have no grounds for assuming that he did not know what was going on in his own country, and that foreign travellers like Cobden and others who could barely move around the country, let alone speak enough Arabic to understand what was going on, did. When we note furthermore that the very people who moaned that the factories were ruinous and losing money were also reporting that a piece of cloth which cost the government 40 pts. to manufacture was sold at 105 pts., giving a 100-per-cent profit,⁵⁶ then we must review our beliefs regarding the factories. Duhamel, who gave these figures of profit, added that the figures did not take into account the profits that could be made from selling the cotton wool as a raw commodity, and the capital invested in the machinery, the buildings, etc., which merely highlights his economic naivety rather than the truth of his allegations that factories were losing money. One must therefore think in economic terms of the advantage that industrialization brought to Egypt as weighed against the disadvantages of importing finished products and exporting raw materials. Whatever the cost of industrialization, the benefit outweighed it by far.

The chief reason for European, mainly British and French, animosity towards Egyptian factories, other than the obvious one of fear of competition, was to be found in the economic theories of the day. The early nineteenth century in Britain had been characterized by a mood of depression that not only derived from the loss of their American empire but also from the falling rate of profits and what Ricardo termed the 'iron law of wages'. In 1830 Britain faced a severe economic crisis. The rate of profit in cotton had declined drastically from 1 shilling in 1812 to 3.75 pence in 1830. Workers' wages had fallen and they were starving and restless. The middle classes, worried over their loss of profit and

their fear of a workers' revolt, put pressures on the government in the shape of a Reform Bill. When the Bill was thrown out by the House of Lords in 1831, serious violence broke out, there was a run on the Bank of England, and the country seemed on the verge of revolution.⁵⁷ The Bill was passed in due course, but it had been a tense and frightening period.

The economic theories of the day, faced with such critical conditions, 'constructed theories of capitalist imperialism which held that empire building was a necessity if the new industrialism was to survive'.⁵⁸ The science of political economy flourished. Ricardo argued for an increased dependence on foreign trade to overcome the declining rate of profit, while Wakefield saw industrial society as faced either with revolution or with colonization. The industrial classes 'who made political economy – with its message of laissez-faire and free trade – into a kind of secular scripture ... called upon the legislature ... to make legislation conform to its dictates'.⁵⁹ British political ideology became linked to commercial and industrial developments.

British industrialists who had shifted to fully automated power looms, thereby expanding textile production, put pressures on the government to open up foreign markets for British goods. We then witness the development of an aggressive expansion of British trade which forced goods on markets hitherto closed to them, even by military means as in the Opium Wars. Palmerston in 1839 could say with pride, 'Never was there an administration that paid more attention to the commercial interests of this country.'⁶⁰ That ideology of the necessity for expanding markets and informal colonization was to cause Muhammad Ali's undoing and that of his industries, if one may anticipate. Britain did not want a new independent state in the Mediterranean, one that was militarily and economically powerful and therefore able to check her advances in that area and in the Persian Gulf.

The Egyptian rulers, faced with different conditions, adopted the mercantilist gospel in opposition to the gospel of Free Trade, which was not in their interest. Mercantilist thought believed that countries became rich when they exported more than they imported, when they saved bullion and became self-sufficient. They believed in the state control of resources, which suited the philosophy of an adventurer who had seized power, and who, in order to stay in power, had to dominate the country, which otherwise would revert back to the control of the Ottoman empire. Furthermore, the mercantilist creed was tied to a concept of imperialism and expansion. It was obvious to the *wali* and his circle of *tujjar* that more money could be made by the state in exporting finished products than in exporting raw materials. Unlike the *tujjar* of

the eighteenth century who had espoused the contrary belief because they did not control the state, nor even the artisans, the new government controlled both the production of raw materials and of finished products, and could manipulate prices and wring profits from workers and fallahin. The *wali* also knew that import substitution would halt the flow of bullion outside the country, in so far as this concerned commodities that could easily be duplicated, allowing bullion to be used for importing commodities the country could not imitate, i.e., machinery, ships, etc., although once these were imported they were then imitated and substituted. He told Boislecomte that his factories, 'liberate me today from the tribute which European industry used to levy on Egypt, and the sums with which I paid for your cloth and silks now remain in the country'.⁶¹ That situation was comparable to modern-day Egypt, when precious foreign exchange was, at one time, hoarded to pay for armaments rather than expended on luxury goods, or even on necessary goods not of top priority.

Before the Egyptian administration could implement such plans it needed to develop a closed-market system to protect infant industries and dump their goods on a captive market, without fearing competition from rival commodities. Much as the industrialized nations were to develop imperialism and for the same reasons, Muhammad Ali was to expand the frontiers of Egypt in a search for markets and raw materials. Protection of infant industries was customary among most industrialized countries. It is still customary to some extent today when the United States imposes protective tariffs against Japanese cars, for example, and Japan places limits on US textiles.

The one area in which Egyptian industry could become rapidly competitive was in cotton and linen textiles. That was precisely the field which posed a threat to British interests. The riposte was an attack on the policy of industrialization as being ruinous to Egypt, though this should not have preoccupied England at all. Had it been genuinely believed in higher British circles that factories could ruin Egypt, there would have been no opposition to them, for Egypt would have become so poor that the *wali* could not have afforded his army and would have posed no threat to anyone. What Britain wanted was that Egypt should turn more and more land over to planting cotton and raw materials, so that Britain could turn the raw materials into cotton textiles; for, as Bowring noted, these, 'formerly so much used, are now scarcely at all sent to Egypt since muslins have been woven in the new factories'.⁶² The success of Egyptian textiles appeared in their spread into Syria, Anatolia and the Sudan, which were all potential markets for British goods.

Not only was Egypt closed to British cottons, but the rest of the Egyptian conquests could potentially be closed off to Britain (a fuller account of these conquests is provided in later chapters). One can only come to the conclusion that the tears spent over the ruinous expense of Egyptian factories were at best crocodile tears shed by the British textile manufacturer who could see actual and potential profits slipping through his fingers at the time when he desperately needed new markets.

Other than cotton textiles, spinning and weaving factories, factories for the production of woollens, silk and linens were also founded. The first wool factory was not satisfactory and the second one was created in 1819 under the charge of the ubiquitous Mr Bocti. The function of that factory was to supply the army and navy with uniforms. Another factory was raised in Damanhur, and together they turned out 20,000 pics or 15,000 yds per year. (Clot Bey claimed that production was 13,540 metres per month.)⁶³ The cloth, though not of superior quality, was strong and well made and suitable for military wear. The success of that enterprise, and the high price of tarbushes imported from France and North Africa worn by the army resulted in setting up a tarbush factory in Fuwa, which supplied the army with 720 tarbushes a day. At first herds of sheep were confided to bedouins to raise for their wool, but in 1825 Cashmir goats were imported along with shepherds to improve wool production and to expand it to include shawls for women, which were generally imported from Cashmir. A carpet factory was also started, but this was an expensive proposition and its carpets cost more than the imported kind.

Silk production began with the silk factory in Khoronfish in 1816 which was supposed to imitate Genoese velvets. A second attempt was made in a factory in Birkit al-Fil run by Armenians brought in from Turkey, who were experts in brocades and *sirma*, embroidery in gold and silver thread and pearls. That factory gave 60,000 okes of silk annually and the result was cloth of good quality. The region of Wadi Tumilat and areas in Fayyum and Asiut were planted with 10,000,000 mulberry trees for silk cultivation. The results in terms of silk production were disappointing in spite of the fact that Druze families had been imported from Lebanon to raise the silkworms. By 1827 the *wali* expressed his disappointment at the poor results, but in 1832 an attempt was made to reform or salvage whatever was possible and a regulation was introduced exempting silk workers from military service. This was certainly an exceptional measure, considering that Egypt had embarked on the conquest of Syria and needed all men of draftable age. The regulation also exempted women raising silk worms from working in

linen for the three requisite months.⁶⁴ Clot Bey said there were 100 looms employed in weaving silk and gold thread, and Bowring remarked that the 'work is well done, the stuffs are carefully woven, and the patterns are tasteful'.⁶⁵

Linen production had been an Egyptian industry from the time of the pharaohs. Under the new regime workers remained in the realm of cottage industries with flax spinning undertaken by women in their homes. In 1830 the industry was organized and a register kept of all linen spinners, who were supposed to deliver a certain fixed amount every day. The thread was then woven in Cairo. Individuals were allowed to weave at home in return for paying a duty of 360 pts. per month per loom, which yielded the government an income of 20,000 purses or £100,000. Duhamel noted that in 1834, when weaving was still a government monopoly, there were claimed to be some 80,000 looms which could furnish 7 million pieces of cloth. He remarked that either that figure was exaggerated, which it obviously was, or else the industry had declined, for when the monopoly gave way to private enterprise the number of looms had fallen to 23,000.⁶⁶ The industry provided sail-cloth, ropes and linen cloth. Clot Bey, on the other hand, claimed the more likely existence of 30,000 looms providing 3 million pieces of cloth, much of which was exported to Trieste and Livorno. He also claimed that in the past few years the cloth printed in Mabiada rivalled that imported from England and Germany, so that the decline in the importation of such stuffs was palpable.⁶⁷ This is corroborated by McGregor who lists £1,586,775 of linen exported in 1831, the bulk of it being shipped to Turkey but some of it going to Austria and Tuscany.⁶⁸

As well as processing industries connected with spinning, cotton carding, ginning and pressing cotton, rice hulling, weaving textiles in wool, cotton, silk and linen, other manufacturing and processing industries were set up according to needs. The first of these manufactures was that of sugar. Three sugar factories were established in 1818 in Roda, Minyat al-Rairamun and Saqiyat Musa. Rum was also distilled.⁶⁹ Indigo plantations spread and indigo works were set up in a number of places. While some of the indigo was used locally for dyes, much of it was exported abroad to Turkey and Europe. Bowring estimated that the quantity produced varied from 15,000 to 80,000 okes per year. Two glass factories were set up in 1822 and 1836. When the manager of the Alexandria factory, Tossizza, complained that the local product remained unsold because too much glass was imported, Muhammad Ali ordered that local glass was to be used and no glass to be imported.⁷⁰

Tanning had been an old guild production, and in 1827 a tanning factory was set up. A Frenchman, Rossi, supervised the factory, which

turned out leather goods for the army. At one time leather had been imported from Europe to be tanned in Egypt, for saddles, cavalry items, shoes and valises.⁷¹ A paper factory was founded in 1831/1247 to make paper out of rags bought from the public and from the remains of the textile mills, and paper collected from each diwan and the various administrations – an early attempt at recycling material.⁷² In 1847 the paper mill was equipped with a steam engine. These new industries supplemented the old artisan type of production which continued to survive as a guild system. The guild system remained unchanged, since guilds were a convenient tax-collecting agency, save for those occupations which involved any step in the preparation of materials which were being produced by the factories.

All of these industrial centres together had some 230,000 workers.⁷³ Boislecomte reported on several factories of '15,000 workers and more'. The figures we have are thus approximate and varied from year to year depending on whether war was going on or not, whether a plague or epidemic had decimated the population, as in 1835 when plague caused the factories to be closed down until the epidemic was over.⁷⁴ We can break down the numbers of workers as follows:

30 cotton factories, each with 500 workers	15,000
23,000–80,000 looms for linen (?)	
(this figure does not include women spinning at home)	30,000
17 indigo works	9,000
wool, tarbush, shawl, carpet factories	12,000
arsenals and military factories	15,000
soap and oil factories	8,000
silk factories	7,000
tanneries and rope works	2,000
paper and glass	1,000
sugar and refineries	5,000
rice and wheat factories	6,000
building trades	40,000
weavers	80,000
Total	230,000

When we discount those who are not really industrial labourers in the proper sense, such as those working in rice and wheat factories, and building workers, we come up with 46,000 fewer workers. We can safely assume that 180,000–200,000 workers or 4 per cent of the population, roughly between 20–25 per cent of men over 15 years of age, were employed in industrial establishments, excluding cottage industries, artisan works and workers in services, even though all of these could by right be included in an accounting of general labour or workers.⁷⁵

According to most estimates, these workers were paid wages that were roughly double the wages of a field labourer, taking into consideration the fact that the field labourer, if he were fully employed, would work only 150–250 days a year, whereas the weaver, if fully employed, worked six days a week year round, so that his gain was in actual terms closer to three times the wage of the field worker. There are few figures available that would allow us to make statements about the amount of wages received in each trade, and we have to rely on occasional hints here and there. In 1245/1829 indigo workers were paid one pt. per day.⁷⁶ We read that master craftsmen were paid 175 pts. a month and their assistants received 75 pts. during the indigo season and nothing otherwise. Silk workers got from 200 to 300 pts. a month, while cotton workers were paid by the piece. Bowring believed that the workers preferred the factories to working in the fields, since they were better paid.⁷⁷ The average worker, presumably the landless wage labourer, who was the poorest member of society, worked for no more than 30 paras or 0.75 pts. per day, when he was employed. He may have supplemented his income by some cottage industry. The pay in textiles varied from 20 to 100 paras or 0.50 to 2.50 pts. a day. Some more skilled than others made up to 140 paras or 3.5 pts. a day.⁷⁸ Workers were supplied with food which was deducted from their pay. Salaries were therefore relatively good, for the workers worked regularly and for longer periods of the year than the wage labourer. Consideration of income leaves aside a variety of more subjective factors in evaluating the lot of the factory worker.

When the government suffered a shortage of specie, as happened with every war, then wages fell in arrears sometimes for as much as four months, as in 1828 when finally the Khoronfish workers were paid half in cash and half in kind. Workers in Mansura complained of the same delay in wages, and forty workers escaped from the factory in 1826, which caused the *wali* to scold his director and order him to pay wages on a monthly basis and see that the workers had no further cause for complaint.⁷⁹ In 1827 the workers in the military establishments went on strike for the same reasons. When in 1827 some unemployed workers could not find jobs in any of the government factories, the *wali* ordered that they be supplied with capital so they could open workshops of their own.⁸⁰

The tarbush factory in Fuwa seemed to be one of the better ones, and wages varied from a master worker earning 600 pts. a month, to a journeyman earning 300 pts., down to the common workers who got from 1 to 3 pts. per day.⁸¹

In describing his visit to Alexandria, St John mentioned a trip to the

arsenal and supplied us with the following details. He said that the stores and arsenal were as neat, as clean and orderly as they could possibly be. Originally the heads of the different departments had been Europeans, but at present the positions were nearly all filled by natives, who rose under the instruction of the foreigners, or had been educated in France or in England. Among these St John talked to the principal mathematical instrument-maker, a very intelligent young man who spoke English fluently:

with what a good accent, many of these speak our language ... I was struck with the skill and neatness of several of the workmen ... all the workmen are enlisted in the pasha's service as sailors or soldiers, and are drilled occasionally, so as to be capable of almost immediate service. They are fed, clothed, and get from fifteen to thirty piastres a month pay, which they, and all the men in the service of Muhammad Ali, receive into their own hands, to prevent any sort of speculation. The wages of these artisans are raised according to their merit, and are never in the same arrear as those of the army or navy ... if they have sons, each receives fifteen piastres a month from the government, and the child must be brought to receive it in his own hand. The wives are all in some sort of traffic or huckstering, and add much to the support of their husbands ... they get three meals a day ... the mid-day meal, which consists of a plentiful supply of coarse brown bread and bean porridge; and for breakfast they are allowed in addition olives ... All the artisans are given meat once a week, and the troops once a month.⁸²

Women and children were also involved in industry. What St John may not have realized was that the sons of workers were paid a wage because they were hired out as 'boys' or apprentices and were trained in the craft by their fathers. St John may not have known the true facts, but he too supplied an eye-witness account, for what it was worth. His figures are not too excessive and tally with government figures, such as we have them. In 1818 children were used in labour, and government agents gathered 4,000 children who were paid 1-3 pts. a day, depending on the work they did. In 1830 the government ordered that 1,000 children be brought to Cairo and employed in the factories. The consent of their parents was to be obtained first, and foundlings could also be employed.⁸³ These rules broke with the guild system, and a child could earn a trade and rise in its ranks by training instead of by heredity.

Women were also hired in the factories, especially in those engaging in spinning, sericulture and in the tarbush factory in Fuwa. Most of the women were allowed to spin in their own homes, but some worked in the factories, where they were as exploited as everywhere else in the more industrialized countries and paid less than the men for doing the same sort of work. The number of women employed in factories is

unknown but it must have been very small. Fahmy gives the figure of 30,000 women spinners at home, but does not specify if any of the workers in the textile mills were men or women.

The treatment of workers in the factories, other than in the military establishments that St John wrote about, must have been bad, as it was everywhere else in the world. Egypt may not have treated its workers any better than did England or France, where conditions were of the most abject kind and the exploitation of workers a disgrace. Unlike the case of British workers whose wages dropped so low that at times they could not feed themselves, Egyptian workers were fed in the factories and the price of the meal deducted from their wages. We must assume, however, that the condition of workers was poor and that they were sufficiently discontented to run away from the factories, go on strike, sabotage the machinery or malingering. These were perennial problems in any factory at the time and even today when absenteeism remains a major problem. That the workers did not revolt or strike more frequently was not because they were more passive than elsewhere, but because their alternatives were far worse. The men who worked in the urban factories were either the proletariat that both Chabrol and Raymond had referred to (see chapter 1), and who comprised 10–12 per cent of the population of Cairo, or in provincial factories were professional weavers. It is difficult to believe that with labour shortages on the land fallahin would have been drafted into factories, unless it was during the dead agricultural seasons. The proletariat and professional artisans would have the option either of working in the factories or of being conscripted. While the factory conditions were appalling, there at least they earned a wage and could support their families, which explains why workers remained by and large quiescent, except when their wages were not paid.

Contrary to Bowring, Rivlin has informed us that workers preferred field labour to factory work, that women were forced to work in the factories, and that a large percentage of the workers were children, quoting Boisilecomte as her source. If fallahin were forced to work in the factories instead of working their own land then it is perfectly natural that they should be dissatisfied with factory work. What Boisilecomte had written was that the men regarded the factories as another *fléau* and only worked in them *avec répugnance*. He also said that women were forced to spin a certain amount of flax which was distributed to them in their houses. He added that he saw 150 women working veiled in the factories of Damietta and Mansura side by side with the men. He makes no mention of their being forced to work, although he does say that the obligation to spin is so 'painful, that one sees [cases of self-induced] maiming to avoid spinning'.⁶⁴

While spinning is not 'painful' in itself, it is possible that pressure was put on women to work in ever-increasing numbers in the factories, and that the mores of the day made it repugnant for women to work in such establishments with men, so that they may have chosen to maim themselves rather than work in the factories. On the other hand, the women who worked veiled may have been reduced to such labour as a means of earning a livelihood, if there were no other alternatives. They may have been urban women, for such women had frequently worked side by side with their husbands in their trades. There were women butchers, buyers and sellers. It is true that working within the protection of a husband and working on one's own were different things, but some women may have been alone and the sole providers. It is not likely that women were conscripted, for their numbers within the factories did not warrant such conclusions. Conscription of women was a radical measure that would have provoked resistance at the affront to the mores of the population. It is, however, perfectly true to say that there was resentment on the part of the population to working in factories, and there was resistance to it. As for children, we have no figures as yet to determine what percentage of the labour force they formed, but children certainly were employed. Women and children have always worked as unpaid labourers for their husbands and parents. The factory system, for all its many defects, allowed them to be paid for their labour. When we consider the number of men who were drafted into the army, work in the factories for women and children may have been their sole source of livelihood.

Besides industry, trade and commerce was the other field of criticism for foreign observers or consuls. By 1816 Muhammad Ali had become the sole merchant in the land, or at least the Egyptian government had. The government bought up all the saleable commodities at fixed prices and became the sole seller, or so we are assured by our eye-witnesses. It is true that the government did set up government monopolies, but it is equally true that the number of foreign merchants established in Alexandria in the import-export trade increased rapidly, which is scarcely an indication that monopoly was severely practised. Perhaps all these merchants were agents of the state, as Briggs was, and made a comfortable living off the government, in which case their only complaint would seem to be that they felt inhibited from making larger profits by the restraining hand of the government. The Egyptian government stopped free trade, or rather the free exploitation of the country's resources by foreign agents. The foreign merchants who complained of the monopoly system were those merchants who had been cut out of a share of the pie, or who wanted a larger share. In true

mercantilist style, commercial activities were geared towards the establishment by the government of foreign trade monopolies and an attempt towards acquiring a favourable balance of foreign trade made. That measure was of benefit to the government, but naturally aroused the animosity of the European merchants, who could see profits flowing into government coffers instead of into their own. France and England both had protective tariffs – witness the Corn laws, the embargo on Indian textiles in England, and the embargo on grain import and import of Egyptian textiles in France – but these restrictions were overlooked by the European merchants who complained of trade barriers.

The complaints of disgruntled merchants were the more outrageous when we note that the *wali* allowed these merchants credit, and when he called in the debts they objected violently. British consul Salt in 1818 had commented 'more than nine in ten of the merchants have been originally adventurers, who in the first instance have no capital of their own'. He noted that in favourable years the merchants were not called upon to settle their accounts, but when the pasha needed money they became 'absolutely subjected to the mercy of the pasha, scarcely one of them being in a state to come to a final settlement'.⁸⁵ Were these same merchants in England, they would have been thrown into a debtors' jail to rot for failing to pay off their obligations. In Egypt, the *wali* forced them to pay their debts and, when they could not, they were asked to leave the country; this annoyed the merchants who tried to bring pressure to bear through the Porte.

French consul Roussel's version of these events in 1818 was, 'If it is not also true but probable that [someone] has conceived the project of ruining all foreign merchants so that [only] those [merchants] who surround the dominator [Muhammad Ali] could appropriate the exclusive right to import and export in that province ... without doubt the viceroy's conduct leads to that end.'⁸⁶ The *wali* had tried to force merchants to buy quantities of Egyptian commodities such as wheat and beans at high prices, hoping to make a killing as he had done in previous years. The merchants refused and went off to buy cheaper Black Sea grain. The *wali*, knowing that that move would cost him a great deal, asked the merchants to buy his goods on pain of no longer dealing with them in the future. The merchants agreed to buy, under duress, then found that shipments of wheat from the Black Sea and the Levant had brought down the price of wheat in Europe so that they lost money. Worse, the *wali* had sent off his own ships to Europe to sell grain at a lower price than that offered by the merchants, who were in consequence 'ruined and unable to fulfil their obligations'. The pasha then promised them credit for a few years, but because they were such

adventurers they were never able to pay their debts and so were sent away from the country.

The actions of the *wali* show him to be a sharp merchant, who outmanoeuvred foreign merchants when he had to. The ships he sent to Europe came back laden with merchandise which rivalled that brought by the merchants themselves who could then find no buyers in the land. The European merchants for too long had had the field to themselves as the sole merchants, and they did not take kindly to competition. Roussel was quite acid about those merchants who acted on behalf of the *wali*, men such as Boghos' brother who had settled in Trieste, a certain Englishman, Bethune, an American, who 'had turned Turk in Egypt', and Briggs who had started the Indian trade for Muhammad Ali.⁸⁷

By 1819 Muhammad Ali's trade and commerce was so extensive and lucrative that the *wali* decided to settle in Alexandria for three quarters of the year to keep a close watch on trade. When he saw that some of the European merchants were never going to pay off their debts, or when he no longer needed the services of such merchants, he put an end to their dealings. On 6 October 1820 he ordered all merchants to pay their debts or leave the country. Pillavoine, the French consul in Alexandria commented, 'I don't know what one can set against a creditor who is generous enough to give up large sums of money on condition that his debtors leave the country.'⁸⁸ At the same time the man saw no anomaly in seeking to change the *wali*'s decision with regard to the merchants, whom he recognized as defaulters. He met with the other consuls and tried to get the *wali* to change his mind. The British consul claimed that some of his nationals had no money to pay their passage home. 'I'll pay it', answered Boghos Bey. Pillavoine then continued his tale, 'This measure, which seems rigorous because pashas have no right to send away Franks, is indulgent to the point of generosity.' The French objected to the *wali*'s arrogating to himself the right, which they did not recognize, of dismissing from the land any unwelcome foreigner, so they dragged in spurious legal rights only so far as it suited them, and determined that another legal right, that of paying off debts, should take second place. In their own lands such a right as payment of debt would have been the first consideration of any court of law, showing the double standard they applied elsewhere. The French secretary of state noted on the minutes received from Egypt, 'One cannot allow the pasha to send our nationals out of Egypt, it would be a violation of the Capitulations, but there is nothing to be said.' Nothing in the Capitulations specified that debts had to be settled.

Pillavoine, who saw the generosity of the *wali*'s action and who admitted that the so-called bankruptcy of some of the merchants was

fraudulent, having on several occasions previously commented on the criminal nature of some of his countrymen and on their crooked dealings, nevertheless could not admit that the *wali* should act as sovereign within his territories, and in 1820 said, 'I feel that commerce will be nothing here so long as the pasha remains the sole proprietor; to remedy that situation, Messieurs the Ambassadors should obtain from the Sublime Porte the freedom of commerce in Egypt ... the Sublime Porte must treat the pasha of Egypt as it had that of Ianina and change him annually so that his successor does not seek to emulate him.'⁸⁹ That passage, more clearly than any other, shows that the animosity towards Muhammad Ali's policies and monopolies stemmed purely from the selfish interests of foreign consuls and merchants and had little to do with the merits of the case. That year Pillavoine bluntly suggested to his superiors, 'To remedy so much abuse [he referred to the monopoly on indigo] which leads to loss in our trade, the Sublime Porte must use its authority. If it refuses by giving frivolous excuses or saying action is impossible it behoves us to give the example by recognizing the pasha of Egypt's independence and signing a commercial treaty with him ... revoking the freedom of commerce accorded to strangers which ruins him and to do so through a company having sufficient funds to do so [trade] with advantage.'⁹⁰ The utter cynicism of that proposal is amazing. In one mouthful Pillavoine explains that his opposition to the monopolies lies in that they fetter French trade, so the *wali* must be ousted from power and replaced by a more docile viceroy. In the next mouthful he decides that, if the *wali* cannot be ousted, then he should be promoted to becoming an independent sovereign so that the French government can make a deal with him that would cut out the same merchants for whom Pillavoine wished to oust the *wali*, and keep only those merchants with sufficient funds available – which was precisely what Muhammad Ali was doing.

Cochelet, another French consul, in 1838 claimed that he disliked the monopolies because they destroyed, 'all freedom and commercial rivalry ... If the regime of exploitation in Egypt is maintained, Muhammad Ali master of the property will continue to be master of the commerce.'⁹¹

All these criticisms failed to underline the fact that foreign merchants-cum-adventurers had flocked to Egypt with the advent of Muhammad Ali and when trade had taken a turn for the better. Before Muhammad Ali there were no more than 3 French merchants in Egypt, but then they had risen to more than 70. Drovetti, who was more sympathetic towards the *wali*, because by then he had become his agent and therefore benefited materially from him, explained that these adventurers who profited from the *wali*'s generosity had left behind

them debts of some 2 million piastres – an enormous sum of money for those days. He pointed out that trade was thriving and that two houses, Briggs and Co. and Anastasi, spent more than all the French and Italian companies combined. He went on to sing the praises of the pasha and to describe how trade, agriculture, public security had all combined and flourished to revive commerce. He attributed such a flowering to the *wali*'s deeds, and noted that the *wali* needed to keep his financial system of monopolies so as not to compromise state finances with their heavy investments in the well being and development of the land. 'It would be impossible to introduce a new order in the administration and in the commerce of edibles without compromising the finances of the state', he remarked. 'This is obvious to the least perspicacious.' The moderates, he continued, would have liked the *wali* to give up the monopolies on such items as cotton, linen, sugar, saffron, which were the money makers, and 'certainly by renouncing them [the monopolies] Mehemet Ali would be making an advantageous concession to trade', but he did not wish to do so because, said Drovetti, the *wali* believed that 'to give the fallah the possibility of selling these commodities would place him at the mercy of certain traders, monopolizers in their turn, who would, by dint of advancing the fallah small sums in anticipation, corner these articles and buy them at cheap prices as in the past'.⁹² If the fallah were to be exploited, as he was bound to be, the *wali* preferred it be by the government rather than by foreign merchants. He once explained to Boisilecomte, 'I have seized everything, but it was in order to render all productive; it was a question of production, and who could do it other than me? Who would have made the necessary advances? Who would have shown the methods to be adopted, the new cultures to introduce?'⁹³ The monopolies, rather than ruining commerce as the consuls chorused, allowed trade to increase by leaps and bounds, as available figures showed, save that now the proceeds of trade enriched the state.

Those who may have been ruined by the new policies, and we have no figures to tell us how many there were, or if there were any so ruined, were the local merchants who had been involved in the Red Sea trade, with the Sudan and the Syrian-Anatolian region. Many of these merchants were kept on as government agents, much like al-Mahruqi and Bocti had been; others had to find other means of support. Merchants who traded locally within Egypt became government agents instead of being independent merchants. They may have become appaltadores or tax farmers, a system that existed alongside that of government monopolies. The tax farmer who got land or the sale of a commodity through an auction, as in the old days of the *iltizam*, collected the money owed on the items of the appalto (*iqta*) and kept a

fee for himself. These *iqtaat* covered such money-makers as the customs at Alexandria, Damietta, Old Cairo, Bulaq, the Khurda (which in the past had been an *iqta* for the Azab regiment and included the jugglers, gamblers, acrobats, dancers, sellers of hashish and entertainers, who were licensed yearly, plus the tinsmiths, ironmongers, sugar and sweet makers),⁹⁴ boats on the Nile (which had been an *iqta* in the hands of Shaikh al-Sadat), fishing rights in some of the lakes, etc. When some of these *iqtaat* were finally suppressed in Cairo in 1838, Medem, the Russian consul, reported them as cancelled because they brought in little in the way of taxes, and listed them as the *iqta* of baths, coffee houses, animal shearers, domestics, muleskinners, sellers of sandals, Jewish butchers, tinsmiths, barbers, bakers, dancers, and buffoons, gardeners, dyers, herbalists, etc., who brought in a total tax of 104,445 pts. per year.⁹⁵

At the same time we must remember that a number of merchants were used in the administration to collect agricultural produce, to oversee its storage, and to carry out the administrative procedures necessary for gathering such commodities and shipping them to the ports, so that former merchants became new bureaucrats. We have no means of knowing what percentage of merchants thrived and what percentage declined as compared to an earlier age, so there is no way, for the present time, to decide whether merchants were ruined or merely coopted into the administration. Among the merchants mentioned as agents for the *wali* we have Ismail Jabal Tariq and his son Sadiq, Haj Ali al-Ujakli, al-Mahruqi, Farazli, Muharram Bey, Halil Bey, Fakhr, Ahmad Zaraa, Ahmad Abduh, al-Guindi, all merchants in Damietta, Badr al-Din, who sold Fuwa tarbushes, Ahmad and Muhammad Al-Maghrabi. Among the foreigners we have Briggs; the Armenians Boghos Yusufian and his brother Bedros, Abraham Abro, and Jean Nubar; the Greeks Anastasi, Tossizza, Zizinia and Petrakis; and Rossetti, Fernandez, Rambaud, le Tourneau, de Livron, Devaux, Lobin and Pastré, who were French or Piedmontese.⁹⁶

Whatever trade figures are available to us are European figures and therefore one-sided, for they do not give the figures for trade with the Ottoman empire and the southern regions, and give figures from certain ports and not those from others. For example, none of the figures we have mention the trade from the port of Qusair, nor do they mention much regarding trade from Damietta and Rosetta. Our figures then are unbalanced and incomplete. Nonetheless, let us examine what we do have.

In the eighteenth century Egyptian trade with Europe, according to Raymond, was one seventh of the total trade figures, the bulk of trade

being with the Ottoman empire. By 1823 one seventh of Egypt's exports was going to the Ottoman empire, the rest going to Europe and Syria. Whereas formerly France had been the main trading partner in the Mediterranean through her naval policies which protected merchant shipping with the fleet, she dropped to third place and was displaced by Austria who became the main trading partner throughout the thirties. By 1839 Britain had displaced everybody else as the result of an aggressive trading policy and through the Trade Agreement of 1838 with the Ottoman empire, which lowered trade barriers in favour of England.

A shift in commercial orientation from the Ottoman empire to Europe had operated. The implications of the shift were an irreversible link with the European market that later was to turn Egypt into a supplier of raw materials once her factories were disbanded. The implications for Muhammad Ali's policies were that he needed the support of the powers more than ever because he was tied to them economically and could no longer survive, in commercial terms, without their trade.

The amount of trade imported from the rest of the world by Egypt in 1823 came to \$3,282,450 (£656,490), if the figures are correct and all-encompassing. Exports came to \$7,276,000 (£1,455,200). Of these sums \$769,801 (£153,960) came from Livorno and \$504,690 (£100,938) came from Turkey in Europe, but no figure is given for Turkey in Asia. The bulk of exports went to Istanbul with a sum of \$1,252,676 (£250,535). The following year imports rose to \$5,043,000 (£1,008,600) and exports to \$10,636,529 (£2,127,306). In 1839 the total of imports and exports going through the port of Alexandria alone came to \$14,129,400 (£2,825,880), which is a sum roughly equal to the entire trade imported from the rest of the world in 1823.⁹⁷ If we are to believe McGregor's figures, the port of Alexandria by itself had the same volume of trade as that going through all the ports of Egypt a decade earlier. However, until we acquire more accurate figures than these, the full extent of trade expansion can only be surmised.

Equally in doubt are the figures pertaining to the revenues of the country, which seem to have increased tenfold during a decade. Amin Sami estimated that in 1798 revenues, as derived from the calculations given by the Comte d'Estève in the *Description de l'Egypte*, were £185,724. These revenues were estimated after a series of catastrophic Nile floods resulting in severe famines and in a plague that was particularly virulent, so they were certainly lower than normal. In 1818 the revenue had risen to £1,502,134. In 1822 it rose a further 25 per cent to £1,881,499. In 1833 revenues rose a further 29 per cent to £2,421,670. By 1842 they had reached the sum of £2,926,625. The peak came in 1848

Egypt in the reign of Muhammad Ali

with a revenue of £3,202,055.⁹⁸ That is, in thirty years the income of Egypt had risen by 113 per cent. However, we have no idea if these figures are in constant currency, that is whether they had taken the rate of inflation into account or not. The rate of inflation was estimated by McGregor to be 66 per cent from 1821 to 1833. Sami gives further figures that show a rate of inflation of 76 per cent from 1814 to 1833.⁹⁹ If these figures were listed in pounds sterling, as they seem to be since the Egyptian pound came into existence at a later period, then the increase was phenomenal, for the pound was pretty constant.

Government expenses rose commensurately.¹⁰⁰

year	revenues (£)	expenses (£)	net income (£)
1798	158,724	135,887	22,836
1818	1,502,134	355,149	1,148,984
1822	1,881,499	266,122	1,615,370
1833	2,421,670	1,927,079	494,591
1842	2,926,625	2,176,860	749,765

From the table we can see that the jump in revenue came in the 1830s when it almost doubled that of 1818 but when the expenses also increased, revealing a relative decrease in net income. From 1833 to 1842 expenses increased by 12 per cent, while revenues increased by 20 per cent and the net income by 50 per cent. The total increase in revenues from 1818 to 1842 came to 94 per cent. These figures, if true, are remarkable enough in themselves, yet if we are to compare them with figures given by several consuls and foreign observers we come to different figures.

The Russian consul Count Medem estimated Egypt's revenues at 720,000 purses, i.e., £3,600,000 for the year 1838, that is, a 50 per cent increase on the Egyptian sources. British consul Barker gives the figure of £7,000,000, or an increase of 189 per cent. Boisilecomte claimed that Egypt's revenues came to equal those of France and were five times those of Russia. He estimated the country's revenues for 1821 to be 50 million francs, which he equated to 70,000,000 pts. [or £700,000] making the rate of exchange 1 franc to 1.5 pts. For 1833 he estimated the revenue at 76 million francs which he equated to 253,000,000 pts. [or £2,530,000] making the rate of exchange 1 franc to 3.32 pts. But he added that the piastre was worth 35 centimes which gave an exchange rate of 1 franc to 2.87 pts., so that his figure of 76 million francs should then become 218,120,000 pts. [£2,181,200]. By these sums Boisilecomte halved the figures given by Sami for the first year and subtracted £240,000 from the second year, a modest decrease of some 10 per cent.¹⁰¹ These figures

were compared by their authors to earlier equally ludicrous figures. Barker estimated that in 1827 Egypt's revenues were less than £4,000,000 at best. Mimaut in 1829 estimated the revenues to be £5,000,000 or \$25 million during that period, while Campbell in 1840 believed the revenues varied between £3,500,000 and £4,500,000, i.e. between \$18 and 23 million, and had only once reached £5,000,000.¹⁰² Far from having 'exaggerated notions concerning the amount of revenue that was obtainable in Egypt', as Rivlin believed, Muhammad Ali's figures were quite modest by comparison. He knew what to expect and spent accordingly, while the consuls really had no inkling as to the amount of revenue and made wild claims. Muhammad Ali probably allowed the consuls to believe that their figures were correct quite deliberately, although he did not realize what use they made of these figures: notably to show how wickedly he was exploiting the country, and at the same time to raise the level of greed among foreign states who envied these incomes and wanted a share in such profits. Bowring equally believed the consular reports and even went so far as to say that there were no statistics worth using in Egypt because ideas of orientals as to numbers are ordinarily confused.¹⁰³

There is little doubt that the country was being exploited by a small elite, as were most countries then, as Egypt had been in the past and was to continue to be in the future. That a new elite of bureaucrats controlled the economic and political life more thoroughly than their predecessors had done, but were also more aware of local conditions, was also true. Such an awareness bred the knowledge that a limited exploitation would yield more long-term results than an unbridled one, which is the sole reason why the exploitation of native Egyptians by the new elite was tempered by some far-sighted measures that mitigated the worse rigours. That elite chose to adopt those policies that allowed them to make the maximum profits from the country's resources. At the same time the country did profit from measures which ploughed capital back into the land and into industries.

What measures were undertaken were not done out of philanthropy but arose from common sense and a desire to see an orderly state that would not give the government too much trouble by constant uprisings and tumult; a state that was either moderately content with its lot, and so supportive of government measures instead of sabotaging them beyond redemption, or cowed by the coercive power of the state and quiescent. At a time when social conscience was practically non-existent, it would be anachronistic of us to go any further or to believe that Muhammad Ali thought in terms other than the good of his family and his retainers, but he did think in terms of keeping the fallah quiescent and under control,

and in this he was in advance of his time. Under his rule a modern nation state was coming into existence, and such a state necessitated a greater degree of involvement in the economic life of the region, and a greater control of the peoples and the resources, for the benefit primarily of a small elite which ruled and controlled the region, but which incidentally also came to benefit a wider group among the population.

One can summarize the success of the mercantilist policy followed in Egypt by noting the successful development of agriculture, with export crops being planted in an area that had doubled, with the introduction of new crops, and the general increase in the area of cultivable land. The infra-structure was developed with irrigation projects such as dams, barrages, irrigation canals, both *shitwi* and *sayfi*, which allowed perennial irrigation in the Delta and the development of two or three crops a year as compared to the former one a year. Infra-structure in the shape of roads was also developed, for every canal bank was paved as a road, and trees for shade, and for wood, were planted along the banks of the canals. A river-fleet network was expanded. A system of cabotage and caravaneurs for coastal trade was set up. By 1817 the *wali* by himself had some fifteen ships other than those owned by private individuals but which were chartered to his purposes. Public security enabled the free flow of commodities, uninterrupted by banditry, pirates, or by bedouin raids, which in the past had so badly disrupted trade.

Industry had developed along with agriculture, as a diversification of resources, and used the products of agriculture in factories. That production was then partly consumed locally and partly exported to the Ottoman empire and later to the Hijaz, Sudan and Syria when they came to form part of Egyptian territories.

Craftsmen, artisans, technocrats and agriculturalists were imported to train the native counterparts in their field of expertise. The imported personnel ranged from shepherds with flocks of Cashmir goats to French engineers who built the barrages and dams that harnessed the Nile waters. Those who were Levantines were encouraged to immigrate and settle in Egypt, that is, the Armenians, who taught the Egyptian textile weavers the art of brocades and *sirma*, or the Greeks to whom the *wali* gave land grants and who were skilled fruit, garden and produce growers, to say nothing of the merchants and sailors who manned the Egyptian navy and marine. Europeans were encouraged to settle for a limited time only, for the *wali* did not trust them, and once they had taught their students they were frequently sent home. A few opted to stay and make Egypt their home, as did Sève, known as Sulaiman al-Faransawi, or that mysterious Bethune, or Shaikh Ibrahim, John Ninet, a Swiss.

Foreign merchants were encouraged to settle in Alexandria. That

explains how that city became the rallying point for the crooks and adventurers who infested Egypt for decades with impunity, and bothered the honest merchants who bemoaned their presence and wished their governments did not issue them with visas so easily. Muhammad Ali was able in some measure to control the influx of rabble from abroad, but his successors were unable to stem the tide. The merchants who came to Egypt acted as the *wali*'s agents, advisors, sources of information regarding Europe, intermediaries with their governments – such as Briggs tried to be with Palmerston – and bankers. Conditions of trade, in spite of everything, must have been favourable, for even after the bankrupted merchants had been expelled the number of foreign merchants increased.

Import substitution was set up to prevent too much money from being spent on imports, and at the same time it created industry in the land. Concomitantly, import substitution implied a great amount of money expended in buying machinery, metals, coal, wood, etc., materials in which Egypt was lacking, and which had to be imported. Muhammad Ali carried out a constant search for fuel in Egypt, the Sudan, and every country he occupied, in the hope of finding coal and minerals which Egypt lacked. Alongside import substitution, trade barriers and embargoes were set up. As a member of the Ottoman empire, the *wali* was hindered from freely raising protective tariffs because of the Capitulations. The Ottomans, however, admitted embargoes on commodities and permitted the monopoly of goods or commodities, which was precisely the line followed by the *wali*. By controlling all trade himself, he could bypass some of the clauses of the Capitulations which were unfavourable to Egyptian trade, and could set the price he wanted for his commodities and import as little or as much as he needed.

Lastly, military expansion was undertaken, first of all to capture and protect trade routes such as those of the Red Sea and the Sudan; to find men and minerals as in the Sudan; to control the eastern Mediterranean, which led to the Morean and Syrian campaigns. Syria was also highly attractive as a trading centre, and rich in the materials which Egypt lacked, so that it presented an added attraction in terms of commercial expertise and future development. The wars of expansion were to open new vistas before the Egyptian ruler and his bureaucracy, and were a basic element in the overall mercantilist structure that they had erected. The wars were to supply, through conquest, a captive market for Egyptian industries and commodities, a source of raw materials necessary for Egyptian industry, a buffer zone between Egypt and the Ottoman empire, and finally a means of controlling the trading network of the eastern Mediterranean.

Expansion to what end?

Independent Egyptian rulers in the past had constantly sought to overstep the boundaries of Egypt, to occupy neighbouring countries and control trade routes that fed into Egypt. Muhammad Ali's regime, following precedent, sought to insert itself into any actual or potential vacuum in the regions surrounding Egypt and lying along her trade routes. Unlike Ottoman notables such as Jazzar, Dhahir and others who had merely sought quasi-autonomy for their provinces but were content to remain within the empire, Muhammad Ali sought independence. None of these provinces had the potential that Egypt possessed in terms of resources and man-power. Egypt's resources were sufficient to render the country independent, as Ali Bey had found, that is, to finance an army and a navy, to invest capital in agriculture and in industry, in brief to turn it into a state.

Had the Egyptian ruler contented himself with aspiring towards independence and a reliance on Egyptian resources alone he may not have aroused foreign antagonism. Once Muhammad Ali had acquired the trappings of a state – an army and a navy to protect his territory from invasions – and had invested capital in expanded agriculture and in starting industry, he wanted to go further. Economic expansion necessitated markets. Egypt itself could have become a potential market had the wealth of the country been distributed more equitably to allow the local inhabitants to create a market for their products, a principle some of the political economists of the day expounded, but an option the new elite were unwilling to consider for it would diminish their own wealth. The only other option was an imperial one that fitted in with mercantilist thought with its imperialist flavour. In one sense the *wali* was caught up in a vicious circle. In order to force a recognition of his independence from both Ottomans and Europeans alike, he must needs overstep his boundaries and acquire an empire, thereby earning Ottoman and European enmity which inhibited his quest for independence. At the same time his economic pursuits led him unerringly to the acquisition of an empire in order to obtain raw materials he needed and

find markets for his manufactures. Muhammad Ali followed the practice of earlier mercantilist European countries like England and France who had sought to build colonies in the New World, and for the same reasons. That is why he regarded military expansion and imperialist designs as essential to his economic development, and his economic development as essential for independence. However, there were serious setbacks to this policy.

Imperialist expansion was to raise Egypt to the rank of an empire but at the same time to bring about the *wali*'s undoing, for it conflicted with the equally imperialist designs of England. England may not have embarked on formal imperialist designs in the Middle East but she nurtured informal ones, that is, of controlling markets and trade, which eventually led to the formal annexation of certain territories. At a time when a search for raw materials and markets was vital, the Egyptian ruler was pushed to the wall by a more powerful England in this clash of national interests. The surplus that had been accumulated in Egypt through its reorganization and centralization was, in the end, to be dissipated in military adventures that briefly netted an empire, and then lost it. And yet without these military adventures the *wali* could never have obtained a recognition of Egyptian sovereignty. Was independence worth the price which the Egyptians were forced to pay? Did they have an option?

In none of his letters did the *wali* mention the value of conquest as lying in conquest itself. It was always posited in terms of what conquest could add to Egypt's financial situation. Each new territory was chosen to supply something that Egypt lacked. Expansion was economic planning carried out by other means. At the same time, however, Muhammad Ali was aware that the imperial option added lustre to his name and his family and, by increasing his stature in the international community, would help him gain international recognition. Muhammad Ali once boasted that he could always buy independence from the Ottomans by bribing them sufficiently. That was not strictly true. The real independence he craved was one that was recognized by the powers, and rendered him immune to any designs they might harbour towards Egypt. To achieve his goal he needed to ally himself with a European power.

According to Drovetti, independence was one of the *wali*'s cherished projects. In 1810 Muhammad Ali had offered the French an alliance if they would support him in gaining independence. His ostensible reason was that he wanted to trade in the Red Sea and the Mediterranean with ships carrying a neutral flag, that is, not carrying the Ottoman pavilion but flying the Egyptian one. These ships would be immune from any involvement with any party to a conflict that included the Ottomans.¹

When the French turned him down the *wali* offered the same deal to the British, who also refused. He finally appealed to the diwan in Istanbul.

In a confidential letter addressed to his agent in Istanbul, Najib Effendi, Muhammad Ali on 27 Shawwal 1225/Nov. 1810 suggested that Najib try to get Egypt declared *serbest* (unconstrained, free and politically independent) like Algeria, so that, should war break out between the Ottoman empire and the British, Egypt being neutral and independent could remain on friendly terms with the latter and could use its ships to supply the empire with whatever it lacked when Ottoman ships were being blockaded by the British navy. Once the crisis was over, he added, the Ottoman government could demote Egypt to the rank of an *eyalet* again.² The Ottomans were not dupes and turned down the request. As long as the *wali* did not have a European ally he could not afford to alienate the Porte, and so he bided his time hoping the tide would turn in his favour.

The Porte had requested that Muhammad Ali go to the Hijaz and put down the Wahhabi movement. The Wahhabis, a puritanical sect of Hanbali Islam, had started a movement of religious reform and autonomy of their own, but in so doing they had threatened the prestige of the Ottoman empire through their occupation of the Holy Cities, Mecca and Madina, and the Hijaz. They also affected the economic well-being of the empire through controlling the pilgrimage caravan routes by 1803. Furthermore they seemed to be gaining influence in Syria.³

When first ordered to go and fight the Wahhabis in 1807 Muhammad Ali had refused, for he was occupied with consolidating his position in Egypt, and he put the Porte off. The Porte demanded a written guarantee that he undertake to fight the Wahhabis. He countered with a request for a guarantee from the Porte that no power would occupy Egypt in his absence. Since he had no funds, he requested ammunition, supplies and 20,000 purses from the Porte before he would go on campaign,⁴ none of which the Porte was willing to give him.

The Egyptian agent in Istanbul encouraged the *wali* to believe that were he to embark upon the Hijaz campaign 'all your demands will be favourably received when you send your son Tussun to fight in the Hijaz ... [this] will confound those who say "if you grant Muhammad Ali the world he will still not go to fight in the Hijaz"'.⁵ Once he had consolidated his position internally, the *wali* was ready to embark on a war of expansion to revitalize trade with the Red Sea which had been suspended for a number of years. *Tujjar* like Mahruqi urged him to go into the Hijaz and help them and himself regain solvency, and had lent him funds to start the campaign. By controlling the Hijaz the Egyptians could divert much of the profit from the trade route to Egypt instead of

sharing it with all the other commercial elements who traded there, as had heretofore been the case.

Muhammad Ali finally may have thought it worth his while diplomatically to win the good graces of the new sultan, Mahmud II, and hold on to his position forever. Were he able to restore the tottering prestige of the Ottomans with victory over the Wahhabis, the sultan could not help owing him a debt of gratitude. Behind that debt lay the knowledge that, where all the other Ottoman viceroys had been impotent to undertake such a task, he would succeed and gain the reputation of the strongest military commander in the empire, a sound enough reason for the sultan to leave him alone in Egypt, and perhaps grant him a level of autonomy on a par with the Barbary states.

Once a Hijaz campaign materialized the *wali* thought further to Syria. He wanted the province of Syria to be transferred to his authority, his *uhda*, on the excuse that that would facilitate the Hijaz campaign, as there was an easy path from Syria to the Hijaz.⁶ The conquest of Syria was obviously another constant in Muhammad Ali's planning, but there he was soundly rebuffed by the Ottomans, and had to talk his way out of an embarrassing situation. He explained that he merely wanted Syria for logistical purposes, to facilitate the task of provisioning the army for the attack on Dariyya, the Saudi stronghold ('*lam yakun al-murad min talab al-Sham awalan wa akhiran had al-manfaa wa la tawsi al-mansab ... bal mujarad ibraz husn al-khidma lil din wa-l dawla al-ulya*'). The purpose was not to expand or increase his position but to serve the faith and the Porte well. He also added that, were he to be asked to continue governing Syria once the Hijaz campaign was over, he would be forced to offer his resignation and request that it be granted to some other vizier ('*yadtar abdakum ila idjarakum bi istiqalati ma a rajai tawidihi waitaihi li waziran akhar*').⁷ This excuse was patently untrue for the *wali* had previously told Drovetti that he could get Syria from the Porte by sacrificing 7-8 million piastres. Drovetti commented, 'his ideas of independence have strengthened in proportion to the successes he obtained over his enemies'.⁸ Colonel Missett, the British consul, concurred with these views. Drovetti had further explained to the French foreign office that Muhammad Ali was to contract a marriage with the widow of the pasha of Dirna, who had been dispossessed by his brother, the pasha of Tripoli, as the first step prior to an Egyptian invasion of Cyrenaica.⁹ While no Egyptian invasion ever took place, it was perfectly true that Muhammad Ali coveted the coast all the way to Tripoli, and, though he never acted in that direction, the idea lay dormant in his mind until 1840 and surfaced from time to time. Missett went even further; in a despatch he explained that the *wali*

Egypt in the reign of Muhammad Ali

has long entertained the design of making himself independent; for which purpose he has increased the number of his troops as much as his pecuniary means would allow ... undertook to expel the Wahhabis ... fully determined to take possession of a country which would add so considerably to his resources. The conquest of Palestine is also an object he meditates ... he still has prudence enough to resolve not to enter-upon the execution of his plans, until furnished by the Turkish ministers with a plausible pretext for so doing.¹⁰

In another report he specified that the pasha's 'secret desire is to assert his sovereignty from Damascus to the extremity of Yemen'.¹¹

The Hijaz invasion was carried out under the *wali*'s second son Tussun, and was expected to be an easy campaign. Initially 8,000 men were sent off. Tussun was accompanied by Muhammad al-Mahruqi as his advisor. The Sharif Ghalib of Mecca entered into a secret correspondence with Muhammad Ali, and helped him with information regarding Saudi strength and force. Shaikh Shadid of the Huwaitat tribe also joined forces with the invading army. His tribe, some of whom resided in Egypt and the Sinai, had suffered from Wahhabi strictures against the pilgrimage caravan coming from Egypt which was their main source of livelihood. Ghalib, whose income came from the dues of the port of Jidda, fared as badly under the Saudis, and preferred the invaders, who promised to restore trade to the port.

After a few minor victories, Tussun's army was caught in a narrow pass and defeated in 1812. The Albanian commanders fled the field, and against all orders returned to Cairo, having had their fill of the Hijaz, its deserts and its limited booty. These men were dismissed from Egypt, but their undisciplined and careless behaviour may well have sown the seeds for a new army in the *wali*'s mind, that were later to blossom into the *nizam jadid*.

Tussun was discouraged by his defeat. His father wrote him a letter to keep up his morale saying,

My son if you are tired of warfare ... to me war is an entertainment and the smell of gunpowder to my nostrils is as the smell of aloes and rose water ... I have fought the British and the French and the Egyptian princes and defeated them with the help of the Almighty and have raised our name and increased our station.

Here we can clearly see that as well as having rational economic reasons for expansion, there was a personal element of pride and self-aggrandizement involved in conquest as well. He reproached his son for having dealt lightly with the Wahhabis and exhorted him to give them a taste of his sword.¹²

A few months later the cities of Mecca and Medina fell in 1812 and

1813. The keys of the cities were expedited to the Porte in the keeping of Ismail, the *wali*'s youngest son. The fall of the Holy Cities did not mean the end of the campaign, and that same year the *wali* went to the Hijaz to perform his pilgrimage, and to give his son a helping hand by leading one wing of the army while Tussun led the other. It was clear to the father that his son needed assistance in matters military. Up to then Tussun had lost 8,000 men, 25,000 beasts of burden and 170,000 purses.¹³

The soldiers faced a rough campaign. The men lacked food and the horses lacked fodder. At one time Tussun informed his father that for the past three days the only ration the men had eaten was 20 dirhems of dates.¹⁴ Muhammad Ali soon grasped Wahhabi methods of warfare, their basic weakness lying in a lack of cavalry and of cannon. He deployed his forces on a series of fronts, to scatter Wahhabi resources, and won a number of battles. He also headed south, occupied the port of Qunfuda in Yemen, and controlled the southern region. Tussun meanwhile was battling in the north. Suddenly, disquieting news arrived from Egypt, and the viceroy hurried home in June 1815.

The news from Egypt allegedly was that one of the *wali*'s mamluks, a certain Latif Bey, had attempted a *coup d'état* late in 1813. Latif had accompanied Ismail to Istanbul to hand the sultan the keys to the Holy Cities, and had been made a pasha by the sultan. Such a singular honour, hitherto reserved for the *wali*'s sons, rendered Latif suspect to the rest of the Egyptian administration, who were probably jealous of Latif. On his return to Egypt, Latif, imbued with self-importance, earned the enmity of the *kathoda*, Muhammad Lazoglu, who hated all mamluks. When the viceroy left on the Hijaz expedition he asked his *kathoda* to watch Latif carefully. Lazoghlu claimed that Latif had tried to overthrow the government and have himself installed as *wali* over Egypt. He arrested Latif and sent word to Muhammad Ali. Whether the incident was a true attempt at a *coup d'état*, instigated by the Ottomans, or whether it was invented out of spite and jealousy by Lazoglu is unknown.¹⁵ However, if the reason for the *wali*'s return to Egypt were the attempted coup, he would not have waited for over a year before returning, as had been the case, and Lazoglu would not have waited for a year after the incident before informing his leader of the events which had transpired. It would seem that the most likely cause for the return of the *wali* was the news of Napoleon's escape from Elba. Muhammad Ali, well informed on matters European, feared that Napoleon's escape might presage another French invasion of Egypt, and hurried home to protect his interests.¹⁶

Tussun had overextended his armies by entering the region of Qasim

in Najd, and was in danger of being cut off from his supply base in the Hijaz. His opponent, Abdullah ibn Suud, knew that he had little chance of defeating the Egyptian armies, and negotiations between the two forces finally took place. A tentative truce was set up, and a delegation sent to Egypt to negotiate terms with the *wali*. In the interim Tussun asked for permission to return home for a rest. The permission was granted and he returned to Egypt on 8 November 1815 to be greeted as a conquering hero, although the war was not yet over. A few days later he contracted plague and died.

Tussun's withdrawal from the region encouraged Abdullah to break the truce and start fighting again. Ibrahim, the *wali*'s eldest son, was appointed commander-in-chief of the forces in the Hijaz. Within two years he had occupied most of the desert forts and laid siege to the Wahhabi capital of Dariyya. After a six-month siege, the capital surrendered in September 1818. The campaign had been an arduous one; the army had had to contend with diseases that killed more men than did the enemy, with sandstorms that blinded them with ophthalmia, with lack of food and water. Ibrahim scrupulously paid for everything his army ate, and sternly warned the men against molesting the inhabitants of the region. Egyptian gold bought off the bedouin tribesmen, who would otherwise have harried the lines unmercifully, and cut off the passage of supplies to the front. Those who could not be bought off were sent to swell the ranks of the Wahhabis and impose an extra burden on their straitened resources.

French authors like Mengin and Hamont, who are not always accurate and had no first-hand knowledge of Arabia or the expedition, have indulged in repeating exaggerated tales of horror about how bloodthirsty Ibrahim had been as a general. On the other hand, William Palgrave, who visited Najd decades after the war, gave a different account based on the stories he had heard from the local population. He wrote of Ibrahim's lenience towards prisoners, of his care to pay for anything the army consumed, and in general of his correct behaviour as a soldier.¹⁷ He did, however, give one account of Ibrahim putting Wahhabi theologians to death after arguing with them matters of dogma and doctrine.¹⁸

Ibrahim was a first-rate general. Although ruthless, he was certainly no more so than any other general of his time, Ottoman or European. He was also a good administrator who knew that to rule a country successfully he had to stamp out what he believed to be a religious heresy, one which had galvanized the population. He conciliated the chiefs of the area by treating them and their people with mercy, tempered by strength, the bitter with the sweet, in Najdian terms.

Palgrave described it as 'conciliation and gentleness towards the national chiefs and common people, efficacious severity for religious dogmatizers, order and progress, payment and justice for all'. Then, lest his readers accuse him of partiality towards Ibrahim, Palgrave hastened to add, 'I am simply repeating what was told me in Nehed, in the conquered land itself.'¹⁹

When Abdullah had surrendered to Ibrahim, it was on condition that he went to Egypt first and then to Istanbul. In Egypt Abdullah was kindly treated by the *wali* as a worthy opponent, but in Istanbul he was summarily executed. The town of Dariyya was razed to the ground on Muhammad Ali's command; although Ibrahim had promised the town immunity from such actions, he was overridden by his father who wished to expunge any memory of a Wahhabi capital. Egyptian and Arab enterprise soon had commerce flowing normally once again, the true purpose of the expedition.

Although the Egyptians had defeated the Wahhabis for the time being they never managed to establish complete authority over the unruly tribesmen. Egyptian military governors tried to impose a policy of divide and rule. One governor had appointed 30 chiefs over a tribe instead of one, so as to weaken tribal resistance and shatter its unity.²⁰ A Wahhabi kingdom, the first, had come to an end, but a few years later in 1824 a second kingdom was to reorganize itself in Najd once again, under Turki, Abdullah's son. Egypt continued to hold the Hijaz and the coastlands of Yemen until 1840, its attempts to reconquer Najd being unsuccessful. The entire trade of the Hijaz was controlled and monopolized by the *wali* so that his government became even more unpopular with the Hijazis than the Wahhabis had been.

For his prowess in the field Ibrahim was named a three-tail pasha by the sultan and made governor of the Hijaz, which ranked him superior to his father in Egypt. This was a deliberate attempt on the part of the Ottomans to sow dissension between father and son, and set them up as potential rivals against one another. That never happened, for Ibrahim, in spite of his new rank and titles, continued to defer to his father in all matters. Once the expedition had been brought to a close Muhammad Ali reiterated his request for Syria, and was soundly put in his place by the Porte who wondered at his temerity in making such a request. With victory over the Wahhabis assured, the Ottoman promises of granting all the *wali*'s wishes had evaporated.

By then the war between England and France had ended, Napoleon was safely incarcerated in St Helena, and the British government could turn its attention to other matters such as trade in the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. British mercantile and shipping interests had always

coveted the Red Sea route and its trade. With the development of steam navigation the whole Red Sea question gained a new dimension and raised the need for coaling stations. The East India Company wanted Aden, but Egypt controlled part of the littoral and her navy controlled the Red Sea. The Egyptian conquest had allowed the *wali* to monopolize the Red Sea trade and in 1819 he had extracted tribute from the Imam of Yemen in the shape of a yearly supply of 20,000 bahars of coffee.²¹ Once Ibrahim had conquered Dariyya the Government of Bombay had sent him a certain Captain Sadlier in 1819 to compliment him on his victory and present him with a jewel-incrusted sword. The purpose of Sadlier's mission was not purely diplomatic, but included a proposition for an offensive alliance, in which British land and sea forces would cooperate with the Egyptian army and pacify the southeastern regions of Yemen, whose inhabitants from time to time attacked British shipping. The British plan stipulated that the Imam of Yemen be associated with the project. Ibrahim informed his father of the British proposal, but the viceroy promptly declined, claiming that the troops needed to recover from their exertions after the campaign. The Porte, which had been informed of the British plans by the ambassador in Istanbul, sent a message to Muhammad Ali warning him off the whole project and saying that the purpose of the British was to put out feelers with a view to conquering the entire region themselves.²² Muhammad Ali was well aware of that, and was also aware that the British had few forces in the area and only a couple of vessels; if there were to be fighting, it would be done by the Egyptians while the benefits might well be reaped by the British.

Balked in that direction, the British government turned its attention to Musqat and the countries of the Persian Gulf, where it landed forces who joined the rebellious tribes of the Jawassim and the Banu Ali against the Imam of Musqat. That year the British East India Co. sent ten naval vessels to blockade Moka when the governor of the town allegedly insulted the British resident. The excuse had all too frequently been used to justify acts of aggression, and was patently designed to wrest economic concessions. The British ships evacuated the port only after the Imam had signed a treaty setting British customs dues at 2.25 per cent, which was 1 per cent lower than the duties levied on the French. Istanbul, annoyed by the incident, ordered Muhammad Ali to occupy all the Red Sea ports as far south as Aden, with which order the *wali* complied.²³ After the Egyptians had conquered the Sudan, they came to dominate the African shores of the Red Sea with the occupation of the ports of Massowa and Suakin, and were to rouse the alarm of the British cabinet with rumours of further expansion beyond that area.²⁴

The Sudan expedition of 1820–22 was the second of the Egyptian wars of expansion. Like the first war, it was motivated primarily by military and commercial factors. In a letter sent to Muhammad Bey al-Defterdar the *wali* said that the Sudanese campaign had no other purpose than to provide large numbers of slaves, to bring the territory under Egyptian dominion and to search for and discover gold mines and other mineral resources.²⁵ The *wali*, who had planned a new army, could not get any Turks or slaves from the Ottoman empire which had placed an embargo on the shipment of mercenaries or slaves to Egypt. He thought instead of developing a slave army from the Sudan. He also needed gold to finance his new projects and public works, for in the past the Sudan had supplied Egypt and Europe with gold dust. The thought of a gold source whetted the viceroy's appetite and a campaign was prepared under the command of Ismail his third son. The *wali* also planned to make the cataracts navigable and thereby open up the interior of Africa to trade.²⁶ The notions which the high command had about the interior of Africa, or indeed about the Sudan itself, were extremely vague. The viceroy admitted to his son, 'We have no idea of the vastness of Darfur, Kordofan and Fazoghlu, therefore we cannot comment on the feasibility of their administration.'²⁷

At first Ismail went out to conquer the region of Sennar, which was done with relative ease, although disease and fevers decimated the army. The following year a second army under Ibrahim Pasha headed towards Darfur and a third army under the *wali*'s son-in-law, the *defterdar*, was to occupy Kordofan. Ismail headed south towards Fazoghlu and the gold mines, while his brother went down the White Nile to the land of the Dinka, where he hoped to sail down the White Nile in the hope of reaching the Niger river, if possible, but if not he would go across Darfur, Burnu, and return to Egypt via Tripoli thus bringing all these territories under Egyptian rule.²⁸ That plan naturally fell through, not only because it was impossible to begin with, but also because Ibrahim succumbed to enteritis in the land of the Dinka and had to be hurried home, prostrate and in dangerous condition, for treatment. Furthermore, by then Muhammad Ali needed Ibrahim to help him with the impending Greek expedition. In September 1821 Muhammad Ali had written to Ibrahim a letter in which he gave his opinion that if the Greeks increased their troublesomeness they – the *wali* and his son – would be entrusted with conducting the war in the Morea. He suggested that his son hurry to settle affairs in the Sennar and forget about Darfur for the time being, since it was of the greatest importance that they acquire as many slaves as possible at once to prepare them for the new campaign.²⁹

The other two generals, Ismail and the *defterdar*, were successful in their missions, although the gold deposits proved a disappointment and not worth mining. On his way back to Egypt in 1822, Ismail stopped at Shindi where revolts had broken out as a result of too heavy taxation. There he was arrogant and brutal to the local king, who set his hut on fire and murdered him and his officers. The *defterdar*, on hearing of the incident, hurried to Shindi with his army and massacred a large number of people, said to be 30,000, but failed to catch the Mek Nimr. The memory of that massacre remained engraved on the minds of the Sudanese for a long time after.

The viceroy was stricken at the news of his son's death, but he soon had to pull himself out of his grief and rally round for another war. The Sudan campaign had not been an unqualified success, even though it left the *wali* with an empire that was half the size of Europe. The slaves out of which the viceroy hoped to create an army never adjusted to the Egyptian climate or the food, and died like flies. The gold proved to be of low quality, and Ismail had lost his life. The only plus for the Egyptian government was that it now controlled both shores of the Red Sea, and controlled the trade with the Sudan, which had been one of the major reasons for the expedition.

The Greek insurrection had left the Ottomans in dire straits with their armies defeated by a handful of rebels. At first they asked the Egyptians to quell the uprising in Crete, in return for which Crete would become part of Muhammad Ali's possessions. Next the *wali*'s troops were ordered to Cyprus on the same terms. The Egyptian victories in both places settled the Ottomans more sharply on the horns of the dilemma. They desperately needed the aid of the forces from Egypt, but at the same time they were afraid that the *wali* and his son might turn their armies towards Istanbul rather than towards the Morea. That is why they first sent them to Crete rather than to the mainland, but finally in 1824 they ordered them to Morea. When Muhammad Ali requested that the Ottoman fleet be added to the Egyptian fleet, under a unified command, the Ottomans jibbed. An Ottoman official in the Reis Effendi's diwan actually wrote to Muhammad Ali explaining that there were rumours circulating in the capital that the Egyptian army was too large for the Morea, and that the Powers had hinted at a secret mission. The *ser asker* said that if the fleet and the army were to come under the command of Ibrahim, the janissaries would object, for they believed that Ibrahim would land in Istanbul with 40,000 men, 'newly trained and organized' and enrol the janissaries in the *nizam jadid*. The Egyptian demands for a joint naval command were denied and the Ottoman fleet put under the command of Khusrev

Pasha, Muhammad Ali's enemy from the days when Khusrev had been *wali* of Egypt.³⁰ A divided naval command, and the presence of Khusrev himself, were to give Ibrahim a great deal of trouble.

The Ottoman *sadr azam*, Rashid Pasha, led the ground forces, but both ground and naval forces belonging to the Ottomans were inefficient, badly trained and badly equipped. Ibrahim constantly complained to his father that all the Turks do 'is eat and do nothing'.³¹ He said their ships needed overhauling and repairs, and their men were in as bad a shape. At the same time, while his movements were hindered by the inefficient Ottoman forces, the Porte reprimanded him for not moving faster.

Muhammad Ali in the beginning thought he could manage to end the war by peaceful means and without shedding too much blood.³² His closest agents were Greeks, and he had even helped the Greeks. One of the Tossizzas was involved in the Philiki Heteria, and the *wali* knew of his activity in Egypt to raise money from among the Greek community. 'Not only did he [Muhammad Ali] not oppose [such activity], but he encouraged it even by his inaction.'³³ It seemed to the Greeks that 'Everything leads one to believe ... that Mohamed Aly knew of the activity of the Heteria in Egypt.'³⁴ Until 1822 the pasha contributed in aiding the cause of Hellenic revolt. Politis claimed that the main reason for this stand was that the *wali* wanted to keep the Porte busy with matters other than with Egypt, and anything which weakened the Porte was beneficial to his position. He was even supposed to have assisted the revolt of Ali Pasha of Janina. Matters changed when the *wali* was invited to put down the insurrection, and Politis believed that it was because the *wali* wanted the Morea for his son. The *wali* did indeed want the Morea, but he knew from the outset that sooner or later the Ottomans would have to come to him for help. His position therefore did not change, but he may have helped the Greeks in order to show the Ottomans how acutely they needed him.

Throughout the Greek war Muhammad Ali remained on the best terms with the Greeks in Egypt. Many of his associates and merchants were Greek; his merchant navy was manned by Greeks. Greek prisoners of war were given jobs as gardeners in the royal palaces and treated well by the *wali*.³⁵ His plan for after the war was to use the Morea as a base for European trade, with Greek merchants added to his list of agents, and Greeks to swell his navy and marine. In that fashion he could dominate the trade of the eastern Mediterranean, which up to that time was largely controlled by the insular Greeks of the islands of Hydra and Spezia. The Morean base would be his springboard for controlling the Mediterranean trade routes to Europe and would mitigate reliance on

European shipping, merchants, or even outlets. The Greeks with their vast trading and commercial networks would supply him with the missing link, the know-how and entry into European markets on his own terms as an independent head of a vast empire.

The Egyptian army landed in the Bay of Modon, and promptly captured Choron on 2 March 1825. In rapid succession Navarino and Tripolitza fell within three months, and the army headed for Nauplia, the capital. The following year Missolonghi fell on 22 April 1826 and finally Athens was occupied on 5 June 1827. In the beginning the Greek war had not moved the European powers to action, although they had paid lip service to the desire of a Christian nation seeking to be rid of its Muslim overlord. It was only when Greek acts of piracy threatened navigation, attacked neutral shipping and disrupted the Levant trade that the Powers decided to take action. The Greek nationalists, who doubled up as pirates when the need arose, operated out of Hydra and Spezia. When they ran out of money, the famous *klephtis* (robbers) financed the revolution by attacking all shipping in the area, regardless of nationality. Black Sea trade, which from 1813 had increased, and the entire trade of the eastern Mediterranean was a lucrative prize for men such as Canaris and Miaulis until it became, in the words of the French Admiral de Rigny, 'The most appalling maritime brigandage to which the misuse of words has ever given birth.'³⁶ The bays and inlets of the archipelago offered wonderful hiding places for the *klephtis*, who were aided and abetted by the Greek authorities. One pirate ship that was caught *in flagrante delicto*, the *Epaminondas*, was owned by the president of the provisional Greek government, Conduriotis.³⁷ Before Nauplia fell, Admiral de Rigny, who went to reclaim captured French vessels, found 28 neutral ships pillaged and guarded by pirates awaiting trial. The admiral was offended at this parody of justice where 'the pirates were present at court, pistol in hand, threatening to burn the houses of those who did not condemn [the neutral ships]'.³⁸

Once the financial and commercial interests of the Powers were at stake they moved to do something about the situation. Furthermore, the Russians disapproved of a revolution on the part of the Greeks, and even more did they disapprove of a future independent state which might become a haven for all revolutionaries in Europe. At the same time the Russians wished a Christian, and orthodox, country liberated from under the Muslim Turk, especially if that country were to fall under Russian influence. Neither England nor the Greeks themselves wished a future Greek state to fall under Russian influence. In September 1825 the Greeks clamoured for British protection. The British did not want Russia to gain a foothold in the Mediterranean, nor did they

relish the 'erection ... of a new Puissance Barbaresque in Europe' were the Egyptians to defeat the Greeks. Both the British secretary of state Canning, and his cousin the ambassador in Istanbul, Stratford Canning, wanted the pacification of Greece. Stratford Canning believed that only something, 'more or less coercive ... but just short of war'³⁹ would have any effect on the Turks. France, on the other hand, had been approached by the Egyptian government to supply a military mission to help with training the Egyptian army and navy, which it did, with the approval of the French monarch, but there were also Frenchmen serving as volunteers in the Greek forces. Lastly, in Austria, Metternich detested the Greeks and their insurrection, for fear that such ideas might spread to the empire.⁴⁰

Although the Greek request for protection from Britain was a clear sign that they did not want Russian domination, England could not act on her own, nor would she allow Russia to do so, and in 1826 the British government sent Lord Wellington to Russia to treat with the Russian authorities. The Russians, who at first wished to declare war on Turkey, said they did not want any active interference in the conflict either by themselves or by the Powers unless it came to the point where the Greeks were being deported from their country. Together both states signed a protocol on 4 April 1826 which expressed their desire to mediate between the Porte and Greece. They believed Greece should become a dependence of the Porte and pay it a yearly tribute, but it should also acquire internal independence in the matters of religious belief, trade and internal affairs. Greece was to be separated from the Ottoman empire for the purposes of internal administration. These were in sum the terms the Greek leaders, Mavrocordatos and Zographos, had communicated to Stratford Canning when he briefly stopped at Hydra on his way to take up his new post in Istanbul.⁴¹ The Ottomans quite naturally refused any mediation in a matter they considered one of internal affairs in the empire.

Once the protocol between Russia and England was signed, France veered in her pro-Egyptian policy and, not wishing to be left out of any European deal, joined the other two powers. By then the tides of battle were firmly flowing in Egypt's favour. Ibrahim, named pasha of Morea, planned to head towards Hydra, the pirate stronghold and the heart of the revolution.

The Ottomans had dangled the lure of the *pashalik* of Damascus before the *wali*, but when it came to a definite nomination, there was none. Even more, when Muhammad Ali demanded the island of Mish, he was stiffly told to withdraw his request. The *wali* sent a letter to the Porte saying that he needed the island of Mish, because it was used by

pirates to waylay his ships. He asked how a vizier could be refused the *iltizam* of such an insignificant island: 'it seems', he wrote, 'that I am to have nothing to do with territory outside Egypt, and I will therefore recall all the Egyptian soldiers in Cyprus, Crete, and Asir [Hijaz] and order the return of my son, Ibrahim Pasha, the *wali* of Morea and [you can] transfer his *eyalet* along with that of Jidda to someone else, since you do not trust me'.⁴² This threat was calculated to put fear in the hearts of the Ottomans who knew that without Ibrahim Pasha they had no chance of putting down the insurrection in Greece. The good entente between suzerain and vassal was becoming strained; the Powers sought to capitalize on it, and the *wali* was ready to listen.

Stratford Canning reported from Istanbul that without the

assistance or friendly interference from without, the Greeks appear to have no chance of final success. They are already become very discreditable belligerents, and without any further reverses the mere lapse of time, if it brings them no succour, must lower them more and more, and render them, if it has not already rendered them, unfit objects of neutral respect.⁴³

As a means of bringing the Morean conflict to an end the British government tried to woo Muhammad Ali away from the Porte. Stratford Canning suggested to George Canning, the secretary of state, on 4 June 1826 '... would it be impossible to enlist the viceroy of Egypt – if you do not go to war with him – in the service of Greek mediation ... by holding out to him the prospect of a pashalik in Syria, in place of the Morea, and some assistance, if he behaves well, in his ship-building scheme?'⁴⁴ It seemed to both men that it was a far better alternative than for the *wali* to 'persist in wasting his resources on the reduction of a stubborn population which must be exterminated before the conquest of that country can be served'.⁴⁵ This letter from Canning to Salt overlooked the fact that Ibrahim had practically effected the occupation of the Morea by then.

Salt answered that Muhammad Ali's mediation would be unfavourably received by ulama and Turks as a sign favouring infidels. He said that Muhammad Ali had not the slightest intention of gaining advantage to himself on the side of Greece, and had entered the war voluntarily to show the world 'that he could accomplish that which the Porte itself was unequal to effect'. That opinion was not strictly true. The Austrian emissary Prokesch-Osten was more perceptive when he described it as an essentially Egyptian war.⁴⁶ Salt amended his views and gave other reasons for the campaign. He mentioned that the pasha 'will not be satisfied until he obtains the Pashalik of Damascus for his son'. He said that France had, more than once, urged the *wali* to assume his

independence but 'he is a person of cool judgement and will never take any important step without scrupulously examining and balancing beforehand all its probable bearings and consequences and the respect with which he looks up to the British government would make its opposition of great weight in deciding him'.⁴⁷ Salt believed the sultan too bigoted to consider British mediation, but that Muhammad Ali was of different calibre. He reported a conversation he had had with Muhammad Ali who told him that he never used any other inscription or title on his seal save 'Muhammad Ali' unadorned, and that all he had as insignia were his diwan and *shawush* (guard). 'Muhammad Ali is little but will be free', the *wali* said, and added that there was nothing he desired more than for Egypt and England to become friends. Salt reported that when he was speaking informally with the *wali*, 'his manner has a *charm* [sic] that it is difficult to conceive without witnessing'. For the time being the *wali* was reported to be 'resting on his oars' and waiting to see the outcome of British *démarches*.⁴⁸ The *wali* informed Salt that if the British government had any propositions to make that might please him he would be ready to embrace their offers and find the means to withdraw altogether his troops from Greece, otherwise, why then, he'd 'finish the business'. Salt asked him what help he envisaged and the answer was 'money is not my object, I do not want it, I should despise it – but England might assist me in my marine. I want ships and she might furnish me with them', and he shrewdly added, '– to be paid for of course – nothing I know can be done without payment in England'. He also wanted 'free scope to aggrandize myself on the side of Arabia [Yemen]'. Salt commented that the *wali* had at heart 'gaining from our government of some general assurance of sanction to his independence should any circumstance drive him into a rupture with the Porte'.⁴⁹ The British government was not willing to commit itself to helping Egypt achieve an independent status.

The two years of war in the Morea had put a tremendous burden on Egypt and its population. It was estimated that the expenses of the campaign, added to the upkeep, repair and equipment of the Ottoman fleet paid for by the Egyptians, had cost 20–25 million riyals.⁵⁰ Plague had struck twice, in 1823 and 1825, while two years of drought had further devastated the country. Money was extremely tight and the *wali* had a difficult time raising funds for the army in the Morea; he was forced to borrow money from his officials and his ministers.

Ibrahim was constantly at loggerheads with his Turkish co-commander who neither gave him assistance nor stayed out of his way, but balked him at every step. His army was unpaid, salaries being constantly in arrears. Muhammad Ali was therefore quite willing to listen to the

lure of other sirens than the Ottoman. He had no illusions as to British motives. As Boghos, his mouthpiece, said to the Austrian envoy, Prokesch-Osten, 'Egypt's geographic situation and the fact that Indian trade lies at the base of British grandeur have made, and very probably will always make, this power seek to maintain Egypt a weak and impotent province'.⁵¹ Nonetheless, being a realist, he also knew that without British or French support he was impotent to break away from the Porte, and so was willing to try other avenues.

After the fall of Missolonghi it became increasingly apparent that the Powers had decided to take a hand in the Greek affair and that they would not allow Greece once again to fall into the hands of the 'enemy'. By then the janissaries had revolted in Istanbul and been annihilated, and Muhammad Ali's threat of withdrawal from the Morea was rewarded by the destitution of Khusrev. Muhammad Ali moved heaven and earth to find funds to get the army and fleet ready for an attack on Hydra, but the following month the Ottomans reinstated Khusrev once again as *ser asker* of the expeditionary forces.

In the interim the Powers, headed by Britain, wooed Austria. Prince Lieven, the Russian ambassador, wrote to Metternich in March 1827 to suggest joint action between Austria and the other three Powers – England, France and Russia. Britain suggested the Powers interpose their squadrons between the Morea and Egypt, to prevent the continuation of the war, which they claimed was being carried out by a 'third party', Egypt. Lieven mentioned to Metternich the horrors of an extermination of the Greeks by the Ottomans, which he claimed to be the reason for such a *démarche*, and not any intention of declaring war on the Porte. He pointed out that the Egyptian victory in Greece would create a new African 'authority which, similar to Algeria, Tunisia and Tripoli, will depend primarily on a system of piracy and brigandage which infest the seas and end by giving telling blows to trade, already affected by the anarchy of the past six years'.

This outrageous statement was calculated to put fear in the heart of the Austrian arch-conservative of an independent Egypt, which would become a den of pirates and brigands. The statement was totally mendacious, for there had never been any Egyptian pirates; they had all been Greek. Egypt had become a model of public safety, unlike the Balkans and Greece. Metternich was no dupe and pointed out that Egypt bore no resemblance to the Barbary states that Lieven referred to, and that to call Egypt a 'third party' when it was as much a part of the Ottoman empire as Ireland was to the British or Hungary to Austria, was to set a dangerous precedent. It meant treating Egypt as an independent state. Was that the interpretation the Powers were seeking

to give, he asked, to declare Egypt independent? That would cause the Powers to fall into the very trap they thought to avoid, the trap of creating an 'independent African authority'.⁵²

An independent African, or rather Mediterranean, authority was exactly what Muhammad Ali wished Egypt to become, and what England wished to deny him. Such a state in control over the trade and commerce of the eastern Mediterranean would pose a threat to British expansionist commercial aims, in terms of trade, and would turn the sea into an Egyptian enclave over half its area. It is true that the Powers as a whole wanted to prevent Egyptian forces from occupying the Morea for the sake of the Greeks, and of Christendom, but above all for the sake of the trade of the region which would fall under the hegemony of a growing and encroaching state.

The Greeks were in danger of losing the war. They had fallen into a state of anarchy, of bitter infighting with each other instead of uniting to face a common enemy, and in the process had devastated the countryside. That devastation, to which no doubt the Egyptian army contributed, was entirely blamed on Ibrahim's army. The Philhellenic sympathies of the European populations had been roused by a press campaign that pilloried and vilified the Ottoman armies, and depicted the Egyptian forces as guilty of genocide and the 'barbarization of Greece'. In private the consuls and politicians conceded a different version of events. In 1822 Salt had reported, 'the pasha in everything that concerns the Greeks had evinced a high degree of humanity and consideration that does honour to his government'.⁵³ He had also given accounts of the dreadful manner in which the Greeks had conducted themselves towards their Turkish prisoners in the Morea and Crete when they had butchered prisoners and tied women to the ploughs like animals. Canning, who spoke publicly against the Egyptian forces and the Ottomans, privately referred to the Greeks as a 'rascally set'.⁵⁴ To end the Morean campaign and to bring in a European intervention, rumours of massive deportations of Greeks to Egypt were spread, and Ibrahim's actions defamed. Deportation of Greeks was the sole reason that would move Russia to action according to the protocol of 1826, and such rumours were cleverly spread.

Athens had fallen in June 1827, in spite of the fact that the Greek forces and the navy were led by Englishmen. The following month the Treaty of London was signed by England, France and Russia on 6 July. That treaty sought to interpose the mediation of the Powers between Greece and Turkey with an armistice, and if the latter refused then the Powers would recognize Greece by establishing commercial relations with her, and eventually by withdrawing their representatives from

Istanbul. The Powers added that should the armistice not be accepted they would effect a naval blockade and prevent any vessels from reaching Greece with arms and ammunition.⁵⁵

Muhammad Ali, ostensibly annoyed by Ottoman perfidy towards him and their reappointment of Khusrev, but in reality probably fearing the outcome of a western coalition against his forces, called in Drovetti and explained that he was ready to cooperate with the Powers, specifically France, 'if and as we wish to the emancipation of Greece'. He demanded the consul instantly send his message to France and he would await the formal and categorical response of the French government.⁵⁶ Drovetti firmly believed in the *wali*'s sincerity, but Guillemainot, the French ambassador in Istanbul, did not and thought it simply 'calculated delays', because Muhammad Ali had continued preparing his fleet. While Guillemainot believed the fleet was to sail for Hydra, the *wali* claimed that it was to defend Egypt when he broke from the sultan and an expedition was sent against him. If he were to make a bid for independence, he reasoned, he needed a ready army and an alert navy. Independence was more important to the *wali* than the Morea or any other territory for that matter. His wars of expansion were a means of acquiring independence extra-legally, but were he to become legally independent it would be worth giving up any conquest. The Porte was his main enemy and to sever ties with it was his desire. He told Prokesch-Osten, 'I want nothing but Egypt. My wishes go no further. Egypt is a small country, but so productive that, without this war, it would have been a pearl. Ten years of peace and I will draw from it forty million talaris [riyals]. If they leave me to work, this country will be so transformed that beside the four great world powers, England, Russia, Austria and France, Egypt by its money will be the fifth.'⁵⁷ There was of course a bit of boasting in that speech, but it also contained a large measure of truth. Muhammad Ali may have wanted to expand beyond Egypt, but he needed Egypt more than any other country, because he could still expand commercially even though he might become restricted in terms of territory. One way or another he would come to dominate the area, and independence was the surest means to that end.

By August of that year Salt was convinced the *wali* would 'withdraw immediately his fleet and recall his son and army ...' 'His Highness thinks of nothing but how to gratify his inordinate ambition ... has no other guide of action but that of his personal interests',⁵⁸ said Salt unfairly, since he had done his best to gain the *wali* to that point of view. A Colonel Craddock was despatched in August to meet with Muhammad Ali and assure his neutrality. Craddock reported that Muhammad Ali had said that the Morean campaign had rendered him a vast service,

which Craddock interpreted to mean either that the Ottomans would not now refuse him the *pashalik* of Syria, or, and more likely, that it had allowed him the possibility of forming an army and a navy in order to attain independence. In return for his neutrality the *wali* wanted assurances of British support in his move towards independence. Neither Britain nor France would commit themselves to such a move, and the *wali*, finally reduced to following the Ottoman path, sent his fleet off to the Morea to finish the job. The Allies sent a combined fleet to shelter Greece from the Egyptian fleet, and anchored just outside the bay of Navarino, which contained the Egyptian-Ottoman fleet, with orders to prevent the movement of the Egyptians out of the bay towards Hydra and Spezia.

Before the Allied fleet had arrived, Ibrahim had warned his father that he did not have enough material and ammunition, that fighting the Allies was against all reason and would end in the destruction of his fleet – a mistake, if not a crime, he opined. In return the father wrote to Najib Effendi, his agent in Istanbul, a message to be communicated to the Porte, pointing out that, if the Powers planned a bluff, then they could call it, but if they planned to stop the fleet from attacking Jamlica [Hydra] then their fleet could match that of the Powers and would destroy it. He pointed out that it would mean the loss of 30,000–40,000 men, the enmity of the Christian powers and people would say, ‘it is Muhammad Ali’s fault, and I will be held responsible for the annihilation of ... lives. I have therefore ceased to send orders encouraging battle to my son.’ He said that wars were not carried out through dependence on the Almighty alone; they were fought with material means, with a knowledge of the art of war, ‘and we are at the ABC of its art (alif ba min fununiha). But the Europeans have studied the entire arts of war.’ He advised the lesser of two evils, that the independence of the Greeks be negotiated by the Austrians. ‘I am in a quandary whether to feel sorrow for the calamity that befell my country or the calamity that befell my lost efforts’, he ended, and advised the Porte to determine what plan they wished to follow.⁵⁹

These canny words fell on deaf ears, for the Ottomans believed that to grant the Greeks independence would mean the disintegration of the empire.⁶⁰ The *sadr azam* (grand vizier) sent Ibrahim orders to ‘pay no attention to the bluff and intimidations of the European powers ... in a case of aggression on their part we need to place our trust in God and deploy the necessary efforts to repel their attacks ... The Europeans plan to attain their goals solely through bluff (*tahwish*), confusion and intimidation. There is the secret of their pretensions and of the noise they make ... perhaps discord will be sown in their ranks or they might

declare war but that is not likely so long as we show no fear or sign of submission. The Europeans are our enemies and the enemies of our faith in times of peace and in times of war.'⁶¹

Ibrahim and his father knew the Europeans well enough to realize that when their fleet fired at ships going to Patras, that was no bluff but meant serious trouble.

Admiral Codrington, who led the Allied fleet, had been given vague orders from London, but was told to obey any orders given by Stratford Canning, the British ambassador at the Porte. Canning had told Codrington that he was to act by fair means, if possible, to stop the Ottomans and Egyptians, but '... it is clearly the intention of the Allied governments to avoid, if possible, anything that may bring on war, yet the prevention of supplies ... is ultimately to be enforced, if necessary, and when all other means are exhausted, by cannon-shot'.⁶² Codrington obeyed the famous cannon-shot letter literally, and was later made a scapegoat by his government who denied having had any such intentions. That letter was presumably the reason why three so-called friendly powers blockaded the Egyptian-Ottoman fleet in the bay of Navarino, which even Stratford Canning called 'a flagrant breach of courtesy ... and a provocation',⁶³ and 'accidentally' sunk most of the fleet when a shot was fired in the vaguest of circumstances.

According to Ibrahim's account of the events, when the Allied fleet entered the bay the Ottoman commander, Muharram Bey, sent a message requesting Codrington not to persist in bringing the fleet into the bay. Codrington brusquely replied that he had come to give orders not to receive them. Twenty-five minutes later Codrington 'took as a pretext,' said Ibrahim, 'the fact that one of our fire boats was asked to move, and when it refused to obey his orders he opened fire'. The English version was that at 1.30 p.m. the admiral signalled to prepare for action, and half an hour later the fleet entered the bay. The exchange between Muharram and Codrington then followed as Ibrahim had described, although Codrington claimed that 'everything seemed rather to betoken an 'amicable feeling' on the Turkish side and they 'showed no sign of hostile intent'.⁶⁴ A British frigate then ordered a fire boat to move and sent a boarding party to carry out that order; shots were aimed at the boarding party by the men on the fire boat and the battle began.

Who actually fired the first shot seemed irrelevant, for Codrington's intention was to provoke the Ottomans, even though he had given his men orders not to fire the first shot. The very presence of the fleet in the bay was a provocation, and the Ottomans were certainly not ready for battle, by all British accounts. Apologies were offered the Ottomans for

the 'untoward event', a perfect understatement for the loss of a fleet and the lives of the men on board.

Once the Egyptian fleet had been sunk on 20 October 1827, Muhammad Ali showed his mettle. Barker, the consul who had replaced the deceased Salt, wrote that the *wali* had displayed great magnanimity on this trying occasion, and sent for the commander of the only man-o'-war in port – a Frenchman – to assure him that events did not alter his friendly sentiments towards all Europeans residing in his country: 'I know well how to appreciate and to maintain the reputation I have acquired for justice and liberality', he ended.⁶⁵ To Najib Effendi the *wali* wrote, 'Oh woe! Oh sorrow! Shall I lament my fleet that is destroyed, or lament the fate of those Muslims who will fall victims of starvation?' For the Allies had imposed a naval blockade and prevented any Ottoman or Egyptian shipping from reaching the Morea. The army stranded there was threatened with starvation. The *wali*'s sharp mind took over and he proceeded to analyse his options lucidly and realistically after this first outburst of emotion.

A declaration of war against the three Powers would have no other result than to increase the numbers against us, since the others will join the coalition thinking they cannot allow the first Powers to get all the credit. It would be better to end the situation now with easy terms, and set ourselves the task of developing our strength everywhere until the inevitable bad days are past ... it is better to conclude peace now with easy conditions and busy ourselves with regaining our strength and pulling our forces together ... the time is not opportune to wage war against the Powers.⁶⁶

The *wali*'s main preoccupation was how to get supplies to his men in the Morea, while the Ottomans were preoccupied with the loss of a large part of their empire. The problems facing each of the partners were different, as were the solutions they each envisaged.

Ibrahim's reports from the Morea revealed that the troops were sick and starving; consequently some regiments had revolted, some had deserted and tried to make their way to Rumelia by land, killing and stealing on their way. The rest were reduced to eating animals which had died, and even to eating pigs.⁶⁷ Earlier that year Muhammad Ali had informed the *sadr azam* that he would withdraw Ibrahim and the army from the Morea if no supplies reached him, and the *sadr* had assured him that he would do his best to send supplies.⁶⁸ These supplies never reached Ibrahim and daily reports of starvation reached the *wali*, as well as news of mutiny, for if the men were ready to die in battle they were not willing to die of starvation.⁶⁹ The Ottomans were impervious to the condition of the Egyptians and blandly gave orders that, should

war break out between Turkey and Russia as seemed imminent, then Ibrahim should leave for Rumelia with his army.⁷⁰

The *wali* did not delay and asked the Porte for Syria in compensation for his recent losses.⁷¹ In a meeting of the diwan which was attended by the sultan from behind a screen, the sultan wondered what would happen should Muhammad Ali be granted Syria and then later deposed. Would the *wali* go to Syria and leave Egypt unprotected and open to attack?⁷² These seemed nothing more than rhetorical questions for the Porte had no intention of giving the *wali* any further territory, and the débâcle of the Morea was as good an excuse as any for not granting his request for Syria.

The *wali*, who had decided that the wisest policy was to pull his men out of the Morea, negotiated with Codrington for the evacuation of the Egyptian army, much to the fury of the Ottomans, who declared that move 'premature and cause for unease ... and regret'.⁷³ But Muhammad Ali was no longer willing to abide by Ottoman decisions and intended to minimize his losses.

The Egyptians had paid for outfitting and supplying the entire fleet of 81 ships that had been sunk, which was a tremendous blow morally and financially, but the *wali* was philosophical about his loss because he had other cards up his sleeve. Within two years he had restored his navy, using local Egyptian labour in his new shipyard, instead of buying ships from the more costly European shipyards.

Navarino was as much an economic triumph for western trade as a political triumph in favour of the Greeks. Without the Morea as a base Muhammad Ali could not control the shipping of the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea, unless he substituted some other part of the Mediterranean for the Morea: Syria for example. The lesson of Navarino was not lost on the *wali*. He assumed the Powers had stopped him because they wished to support Christian Greeks against Muslim armies. He failed to understand that the British government, and the rest of the Powers, did not want the rise of an 'African Power'. The French government did, however, respond to his appeal for technical assistance and even led him to believe that they might in time support his bid for independence. Much as a later Egyptian ruler, Jamal Abd al-Nasir, tried to do, the *wali* attempted to play off one power against the other. The Powers, however, had more in common than they had differences; although England and France had gone through years of bloody warfare, peace had been the outcome and not cold war, and in the final analysis they were more apt to cooperate than to oppose each other, especially if opposition would lead to another war, which neither nation wanted. The long war between these two countries had tilted the

balance in favour of England, and France was neither able nor willing to seek a second round with Britain over such a small stake as Egypt.

Muhammad Ali sought to woo the British by his economic projects and his bait was to let the mails through to India, and deal fairly with British merchants. He did not comprehend that a weak Ottoman sultan who gave British merchants all the concessions they needed, and acted as a dam against the flow of Russian power into the Mediterranean, was more valuable to them and to their Mediterranean policy than a strong, independent ruler in Egypt; the more so when that ruler had a policy of his own that made him a potential commercial rival. Supporting the Ottoman throne became British policy until 1899 when the locus of imperial defence necessitated a new approach, the permanent occupation of Egypt as the safeguard for the route to India.

In one sense, Navarino was a warning to Muhammad Ali that he had overstepped his bounds; it was a warning that fell on deaf ears. Great though his fear of England was, he had enough confidence in himself and in his strength to push on with his plans.

The Egyptian army was busy with new conscripts and manoeuvres. Some people assumed these were to help the Ottomans in their war with Russia, which had broken out in 1828. Drovetti rightly claimed that the preparations presaged an impending invasion of Syria. He suggested to his superiors that the *wali* be deflected and invited to invade North Africa instead.⁷⁴ At the time, Russian advances in Ottoman territories had brought the French government to the point where it was ready for the dismemberment of the Ottoman empire and was deciding what compensations France would require once the empire had collapsed. The French government therefore offered a complaisant ear to a project whereby the Egyptian pasha would send an army to Algeria under Ibrahim. The French were very insistent that it should be Ibrahim who led the army, for they recognized his military value. Muhammad Ali believed such an expedition would be over in two months, and that the Ottomans, whom he qualified as donkeys, would not jib at the conquest of territory that was nominally under their rule.⁷⁵ In his negotiations with the French government the *wali* demanded 4 men-o'-war, each carrying 80 cannon and 10 million francs. The French cast the extra lure of a promise: 'The outcome of the expedition may establish his power and that of his family on a larger and more solid base',⁷⁶ a hint at independence.

When the British government got wind of the project it tried to put a stop to it. The French government was warned to abandon its plan of action, while British representatives were ordered to inform the *wali* and the Porte that the British government would not view with indifference

a change in the possession of African territories, especially if it meant the promotion of French influence.⁷⁷ An alliance between Muhammad Ali and the French implied that he had fallen under French protection: an expansion of French power that the British government could not allow. At the same time the Russians refused to fall in with French plans for compensation in Europe, so the French decided to go into Algeria themselves, using the Egyptians as an auxiliary force. The *wali* refused to do that; he said it would make him lose his reputation and his honour, and the joint project folded up.⁷⁸ This was fortunate for Muhammad Ali for, unknown to him, the French had in mind a project that would not only bring about their occupation of Algeria but would also extend and prepare the way for their eventual possession of Egypt as well.⁷⁹

On the other hand Muhammad Ali was playing his own game. Once the Morean expedition ended he was afraid the sultan would plan reprisals against him. At the same time he wanted compensation for all his losses. He therefore planned the conquest of Syria. Syria would be ample compensation and a buffer between him and the sultan should any fighting break out between them. The detour to Algeria had been an enticing morsel, but not one that distracted him for long from his main goal, Syria. The Algerian venture would have supplied him with four ships of the line, invaluable for the Syrian expedition, and they would have given him naval supremacy over the Ottomans. He suspected the French would stay in Algeria once they landed, especially if they were to bring over French colonists, and that the event would present problems for British interests in the Mediterranean, and so he told Barker in what proved to be prophetic words.⁸⁰

From October 1828 when Ibrahim had finally landed in Egypt until November 1831 when the Egyptian army invaded Syria, a great deal of activity was apparent in Egypt. A French engineer, LeFebure de Cerisy, arrived in May 1829 to take charge of a new shipyard in Alexandria where the *wali* hoped to build himself a new navy. New levies of conscripts were raised, new cavalry regiments created. The administration was overhauled and six provinces were set up, one under the *wali* and one under Ibrahim, who was given a key role to play in the administration.⁸¹ Ibrahim tried a total change of administration and especially in the *khazina*, the treasury. One of the first changes he ordered was to transfer to double-entry bookkeeping, and in European figures.⁸² The accountants had to learn their arithmetic all over again, but the administrators could make more sense out of the figures they were offered. New barracks were erected in Alexandria, the swamps drained and cleared from the middle of the city and the streets watered twice a day. Soldiers, paid 20 paras a day, were used for these tasks.⁸³ Ibrahim called a *majlis* of 400 men

which he referred to as 'my parliament' to help correct the abuses in the administration and solve the problems of the fallahin.⁸⁴ The Russian consul reported these changes and remarked that Ibrahim was so feared in Egypt that people trembled at the mere mention of his name: 'it is thought that such fear could mitigate in some fashion the oppression which the inhabitants endure from their governors and the administrators of the different provinces'.⁸⁵

Such feverish activities presaged impending action. Optimists believed it was to aid the Ottomans, others more realistic believed it was to invade Syria. The Russian consul thought Muhammad Ali had lost his opportunity to become independent because the Morean expedition had ruined him financially and at the same time had revealed to the Porte the full extent of his financial resources. The Porte exerted pressure on the *wali* to increase their resources at his expense. He was instructed to repair, restore and re-equip the ships that had escaped sinking in Navarino, and ordered to send funds and raise regiments to help the Porte in its war with Russia. The *wali* sent funds, but put off repairing the fleet and sending troops, for obvious reasons. He was planning a pre-emptive strike and needed all his resources. The Porte placed an embargo on the export of wood to Egypt, which they knew he needed for his navy, so the *wali* dismissed the Ottoman officers in his navy and replaced them by Egyptian officers, trained by the French. Barker estimated the dismissed Ottomans at 700–800. He also disbanded 2,000 artillery men who received 60 pts. a day and had them replaced by Egyptians who earned 15 pts. a day.⁸⁶

By the end of the following year, 1830, the *wali*'s preparations were done. In a conversation he had with Barker he said, in talking about the Ottomans, 'you may prop up here and prop up there, but all will be to no purpose'. Referring to Algeria he wondered who would object to his taking it: 'don't they know that I will end piracy? ... I am a cultivator ... and essentially a merchant'.⁸⁷ He told Barker that the only way to strengthen the sultan was to support him, Muhammad Ali, because by so doing the padishah would have at his disposal a disciplined army of 125,000 men ready to form a barrier against the Russians at Istanbul and in Persia, for it was there that the British had to fight the Russians. 'The Porte is gone', he went on, 'and England must be prepared to raise a force in Asia to meet the Russians and where can she find it but with me and with my son after me?' This ploy for recognition was made plainer when he added,

[the people] love me, and would flock to my standard; if the English would come forward and support me ... the hostility of the English government paralyzes [*sic*] all my efforts ... with the English for my friends, I can do everything;

Egypt in the reign of Muhammad Ali

without their friendship I can do nothing. England is all powerful, I foresaw long ago that I could undertake nothing grand without her permission. Wherever I turn she is there to baffle me.⁸⁸

But England was not to help Muhammad Ali and was to bring to a halt his successful campaigns and force him to retrench.

The Syrian expedition began when the land forces left Egypt on 31 October 1831, shortly followed by the naval forces. The excuse given for the expedition was a quarrel with Abdullah Pasha of Acre. The *wali* alleged that 6,000 fallahin had fled to Acre to escape the draft, corvée and taxes, and he wanted them back. That was simply an excuse, for the *wali* had planned to invade Syria from his first years in Egypt.

At first, the Egyptian forces had trouble occupying Acre, but within six months it had fallen and in less than ten months the whole of Syria was occupied by Ibrahim's army. The Ottoman forces that were sent against it were no match for Ibrahim and his *nizam jadid*, and in a battle outside Homs he captured eight Ottoman pashas, and a number of cannon, baggage and 3,000 prisoners, so the battle became known in Egypt as the 'defeat of the eight pashas'. The battle of Beylan closed the first phase of the Syrian expedition and allowed the Egyptian army to cross the Taurus mountains and advance to Konia, where they were ordered to halt by the *wali*.

Ibrahim's first reports concerning the reactions of the Syrian population to an occupation were favourable. He reported that the inhabitants of the country, especially the Christians, were agreeable to his rule, that opposition came from the Druze, not because they were dissatisfied but because of their opposition to Amir Bashir Shihab, Egypt's ally.⁸⁹ Upon entering Jerusalem, Ibrahim had declared that henceforth all distinctions between Christians and Muslims would cease, a declaration the Christians received with joy as presaging a new era.

The occupation was carried out with little carnage. Muhammad Ali had written to his son to deal with Abdullah and Acre with clemency, and said,

Is there any enjoyment, my son, to surpass that of pardoning our enemies? I have read in some book of history that forgiveness is the alms-giving (*zakat*) of the victorious, and we will find in revenge none of the pleasure we derive from forgiveness. Such a trait has been innate in your father and it is understood that the branch follow the trunk.⁹⁰

He continued that when news of their benevolent treatment of Abdullah had reached the consuls, they praised him for it and said it was worthy of being written on the pages of time with a gold pen. When Ibrahim's men had disregarded his instructions and sacked the town of Acre,

Ibrahim had a search made for the looted articles and restored them to their owners, punishing his officers for allowing such behaviour from their troops.⁹¹

As soon as Syria was occupied, Muhammad Ali wanted to raise levies of men there instead of from Egypt. Ibrahim did not believe that was feasible; he explained to his father, 'Egypt is ours to do with as we please ('Misr mulkina wa ahluha bimathabat mamalikina'), but these [Syria] are recently occupied countries ... how can I stop them from escaping when our own soldiers escape and we cannot find them?'⁹²

Escaping soldiers seemed to have been common among both armies, for Turks defected to the Egyptian ranks and Egyptian soldiers disappeared. When Ibrahim caught a Turkish spy infiltrating his ranks, his father advised him to treat the spy well, and show him how well paid, fed and well treated the Egyptian soldiers were, compared to the Ottomans. He ordered the spy released and returned to his side to spread the news that all deserters who came over to the Egyptian side would be well treated. By these means he hoped to encourage even more desertions from the Ottoman ranks.⁹³ The irony there must have been unconscious since Ibrahim was constantly bemoaning the lack of pay for his men. A few months later he sent a strongly worded letter to his father remonstrating with him over the lack of funds.

Your energy which can move mountains is minimal towards the army, which causes me puzzlement for if you have no feelings of affection towards me have you none towards Egypt either? If things go wrong here are they not inevitably to end Egypt's very existence (*baqa*)? We used to consider the Turks as lazy and lacking in energy (*la himma lahum*), but they were spending their wealth and paying their soldiers' salaries regularly. The last funds we got were 14 months ago and came to 8,000 purses. Your Majesty, although I use crass terms to describe our situation here ... their purpose is good, thus I beg your forgiveness.⁹⁴

These complaints of lack of money, guns and men were to continue unabated for the entire duration of the expedition. Muhammad Ali had milked the country dry and had no funds to send Ibrahim. Cholera had struck Egypt in 1831, while a drought in 1833 had made matters more difficult. With the best will in the world the *wali* was unable to find the money to send his son. In spite of that, the soldiers who were 'broke, without a single dirhem. The officers' pockets are empty'⁹⁵ were forced by their commander to pay for every single thing they took from the population. Later, when accused of living off the land, Ibrahim proudly said, 'I pay the price of everything I use ... I am responsible for the upright behaviour of my soldiers' ('istiqamat al-asakir wa husn sairihim').⁹⁶

At times Ibrahim's pleas for help sounded desperate, as when he wrote, 'Why has the battery I requested not been sent? ... Why was there no answer to my request? ... If no answer is forthcoming then I will be daring and will be forced to leave your orders unfulfilled.' He ended bitterly, 'I request something from my superiors and I get no answer, I give orders to my inferiors, but I am not obeyed ... what pride can I derive from my mission?'⁹⁷ The remark regarding his inferiors was in reference to his complaint that his cousin, Ibrahim Yeken, did not obey his orders. Lack of pay had caused the 9th infantry regiment to revolt and they had killed their colonel after going 15 or 16 months in arrears of pay.

In Egypt conscription was heightened, and interestingly enough there were no uprisings against conscription. A couple of men had been hanged for spreading rumours that the Egyptian army had been defeated in Acre, in an attempt to end false alarms and defeatist talk among the population. Some people did mutter at the thought of fighting fellow-Muslims and opposing the sultan, but such talk was minimal.

Negotiations between the sultan and his vassal came to nothing, and by spring 1832 Muhammad Ali and his son were divested of their ranks and titles and their names omitted from the annual list of governors. Once Ibrahim had gone beyond the Syrian frontiers and had reached Konia, Muhammad Ali advised him to wait a year or two before pushing on, until he had had time to find out the feel of the land with the Powers.⁹⁸ Ibrahim strongly objected to that procedure; he had run out of funds, his men had no winter uniforms and were wearing thin summer clothing in the midst of the snows of Anatolia, they had few guns and needed more cavalry. Ibrahim disregarded his father's instructions and on 21 December a major battle took place between his forces and those of the *sadr azam*. The battle of Konia resulted in a resounding defeat for the Ottomans and the capture of the *sadr azam*, Reshid Pasha. That victory was all the more sweet to Ibrahim because his army had been outnumbered and outgunned by the Ottomans. Ibrahim reported that the grand vizier had had 7 infantry regiments, 6 cavalry and 82 or 92 guns. On his part he had 5 infantry regiments, 4 cavalry and 6 gun batteries. He had captured from the Ottomans 1 regiment of foot, 4 battalions and 20 guns, and added that all the Bosniaks in the army had defected to the Egyptian side.⁹⁹

Prior to the battle of Konia, Ibrahim had discussed with his father the possibility of getting a *fatwa* from the *mufti* of Aleppo to depose the sultan and then spreading the terms of the *fatwa* in Anatolia and Istanbul. He hoped thereby to effect the deposition of the sultan by

popular revolt, not by force of arms. Once the *sadr* had been captured Ibrahim planned another means of ousting the sultan, this time using an Ottoman high official to that end.

Ibrahim treated the *sadr* like an honoured leader rather than as a prisoner of war, and went through a charade whereby his orders to his army were given in the name of the *sadr*. Ibrahim's plan was to have the *sadr* join the Egyptians and march to Istanbul: 'we can carry out the deposition of Mahmud and place his son on the throne easily', he wrote to his father.

If such a plan meets with your approval then let us know at once so that we can start before it is too late. But if Your Highness intends to negotiate and simply wants to threaten and frighten Istanbul into peace terms favourable to ourselves, there is little purpose to be served in remaining here. It would be better for us to leave for Iznik and seize the coastal cities through which we can be resupplied from Egypt, and from there perhaps we can rouse a revolt (*nuthir fitna*) which would mitigate our having to depose Mahmud.

Ibrahim, who obviously preferred the first option, said, 'Had it not been for your orders I would already have been at Istanbul. Why do you delay? Is it fear of Europe or for other reasons?'¹⁰⁰

Another letter three days later informed the *wali* that unless there was interference from Europe the time was ripe to march to Istanbul and tear out 'that affliction (*baliyya al-dahma*) by its roots'.¹⁰¹ Ibrahim was sure that he could topple the sultan with little effort. Throughout these letters Ibrahim's dislike for the sultan and his low opinion of the Ottomans comes through very clearly. He had already obtained a *fatwa* which said, 'If the imam of the muslims oppressed (*gar*) the *umma*, is it legal for them to depose him?', to which the answer was, 'It is, on condition that the *umma* be composed of 12,000 men who are all in agreement.'¹⁰² Both Ibrahim and the *sadr* feared that if word of their efforts to depose him reached the ears of the sultan, 'his love of the sultanate might cause him to kill the princes, which blemish would fall on Egypt'.¹⁰³ Ibrahim informed the *sadr* that neither he nor his father coveted the throne; they simply wanted Abdul Mejid on it. When the *sadr* objected that the prince was but a child, Ibrahim countered with a diatribe against the Ottoman custom of breeding princes among the women of the harem, asking how a man with such an upbringing could learn about government and the affairs of state? If the prince were to sit on the throne when young, he continued, he would learn under the direction of wise tutors and slowly reach the state of the perfect human being (*insan kamil*) until he were able to give kingship its due and the nation its due. The *sadr* retorted that Mahmud was more likely to

butcher the prince, to which Ibrahim countered that that could hardly be blamed on him, and offered the revolutionary concept that they had best do away with kings: 'we want the consensus (*ijma*) of the *umma* in its affairs and we renounce completely the existence of kings ('*nastaghni batatan an wujud al-muluk*').¹⁰⁴ These fiery words were prophetic, but not for another century. The *sadr* must have been stunned at hearing these words, as would indeed have been Muhammad Ali had he heard them. He was certainly not content when he read them. Ibrahim suggested to the *sadr* that they march on Istanbul and set the government in order, and if the sultan appealed to the Christian kings then they would struggle for the faith and receive the rewards of jihad. This last move seemed to have won the approbation of the *sadr*, or else he simulated such an approval fearing he had no other option.

The Egyptian army marched northwards from Konia. The weather was inclement and camels died from the cold. Ibrahim, who moved without orders from his father, justified his move. 'So long as that malevolent man known as Sultan Mahmud lives he will always harm us whenever he can ... it is our duty to excise him and place the prince on the Ottoman throne', he explained to his father.

If Europe does not like that, it will have little time in which to stop us, and what can Europe do in the face of a *fait accompli*? I plan to go to Bursa and Mudanya. I hasten to move before I receive a message from you to stop where I am because we cannot live off this area; it is a poor region and only Bursa can feed us. If we are asked why we move to Bursa we must answer that it is not out of enmity but out of a desire to visit the capital of the sultanate, and if they accept that argument we can move to Uskudar. If we have to fight them that will give them little time in which to prepare.¹⁰⁵

By the time he had received orders to cease his advance he was already in Kutahia, 100 miles from the capital as the crow flies.

Ibrahim had underestimated the Ottomans if he thought they would sit still while he advanced. The Ottomans asked the Powers for aid, and when none was forthcoming they entered into an alliance with Russia. That alliance galvanized the Powers into action, where the predicament of the sultan had not.

According to the reports sent to France by the French consul in Egypt, Muhammad Ali was planning to declare his independence much as Greece had done. The French government did not object to the separation of Egypt from the Ottoman empire, although it had envisioned the separation as some sort of vassalage along the lines of the dey of Tunis. As the French secretary of state, Sebastiani, wrote to Mimaut, 'We have but to congratulate ourselves for having favoured in Egypt the

birth and development of a Power capable one day of preserving an influence coming from Europe ... a Power so naturally a friend to France, interested as we are in the freedom of the Mediterranean, and whose development secures for us useful political and commercial relationships.' He asked Mimaout to offer the *wali*, 'all our wishes for prosperity'.¹⁰⁶ These words of encouragement were based on the belief that Muhammad Ali only wanted Egypt and Syria, and once this was accomplished he would learn to 'stop at the right time and to earn further glory by wisely using his successes'.¹⁰⁷ By this he meant that the *wali* should come to an *accommodement* with the Porte and avoid any 'dangerous complications'. He warned that, if this did not happen, then the government of France must regretfully withdraw its support for the *wali*. Varenne, the chargé d'affaires at the Porte, advised Mimaout that the viceroy should evacuate Caramania and retain Syria, then enter into negotiations.¹⁰⁸ The Porte was slow to respond to these negotiations and the *wali* predicted that the Porte would send an army against Ibrahim, that the army would be defeated and the road to Istanbul left wide open. The *wali* was ready to promise that Ibrahim would not move out of Konia and would not attack first.¹⁰⁹ A few days later the battle of Konia took place and the Ottomans were defeated.

On 22 December 1832 the Russian general Muraviev arrived in Istanbul and announced the willingness of the Russian government to help the sultan on land and sea. Once the news of the defeat of the Ottoman forces had reached the capital, the sultan threw himself into the arms of the Russians, against the advice of all his cabinet and perhaps against his own better judgement. Mahmud had at first appealed to the British government, but it was in no condition to render Mahmud assistance. Palmerston, the secretary of state, had to face five international problems which drove out all thought of British intervention outside of Europe. These were the question of the Greek frontiers, the Belgian revolt against the Netherlands, the Russian invasion of Poland after the Poles had declared their independence, and events in Italy and in Portugal. Each one of these issues directly threatened British security and fully occupied the administration. Palmerston had been vaguely aware of Muhammad Ali's growing importance and in February 1831 had written to Ponsonby, the British ambassador at the Porte, voicing a fear that the Egyptians might, through their occupation of Syria, pose a danger and 'acquire the command of Mesopotamia to the Persian Gulf'. He believed that this would not give Muhammad Ali the command of the Euphrates.¹¹⁰ But, with so many pressing European problems, eastern problems were pushed into the background for the time being. Internally England was also facing problems. In the 1830s

the British economy was suffering economic stagnation and labour unrest, and the threat of civil strife over the Reform Bill. Quite understandably the sultan's pleas for help from his encroaching vassal fell on deaf British ears, for the navy had been committed to Portugal and the Netherlands, and had no ships to spare. Mahmud was forced to throw his lot in with the Russians, his traditional enemies.

The Russians offered the Ottomans military aid in return for a defensive alliance, in the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, signed on 8 July 1833. The treaty contained a secret clause which opened the Dardanelles to the Russians in times of war and closed them to everyone else.

Muraviev went to Egypt to meet with the viceroy, and the sultan sent Khalil Pasha, the admiral, after him to negotiate. Both men arrived in Egypt within a week of each other. When this happened Ibrahim wrote to his father suggesting terms for the negotiations.

The first in importance in our demands is independence (*istiqlal*). Second, acquisition of the *sanjak* of Antalia, Alaya, Cilicia and the island of Cyprus [which Egypt had controlled from 1824 when it had pacified it]. Third, add Tunis and Tripoli. We must not back down on any demands, for if we do not acquire independence then our efforts would have been futile and the Ottomans will continue to pester us with unreasonable demands for money. The only way to be rid of them is through independence. As for our second items, the districts of Antalia, Alaya and Cilicia, they are motivated by our need for wood. Countries which have fleets need wood. Do you remember when the English recently forbade the export of wood, and we went to Austria which turned us down? Cyprus is indispensable for two reasons, to act as a base for our fleet, and to prevent the Porte from having access to the heart of our possessions ... As for Baghdad, we can raise the issue and drop it, for the possession of that *pashalik* is of little value, it is too far, and like the Sennar poor in resources.¹¹¹

From this letter we have a clear picture of how Ibrahim and his father viewed their recent acquisitions, and their reasons for seeking to hold them. They saw Egypt as a naval power that would dominate the eastern Mediterranean in terms of trade and commerce. Because of that they needed wood for ships, copper from Tokat, to line the ships, and a naval base in Cyprus – the same reason for which Britain acquired Cyprus a few decades later. With Egypt, Syria and Caramania in his grasp, the *wali* of Egypt would become a Mediterranean power. He controlled one route to India through the Red Sea; he could now control the Levant trade as well. What the Morea had failed to give him, a northern base, the new conquests would do. This was not conquest for the sake of conquest; this was conquest that was to turn Egypt into a regional power.

Palmerston could see the danger behind the *wali*'s ambitions. In March he wrote to his brother, the British minister in Naples,

His [Muhammad Ali's] real design is to establish an Arabian kingdom, including all the countries in which Arabic is the language. There might be no harm in such a thing in itself; but as it would necessarily imply the dismemberment of Turkey, we could not agree to it. Besides the Turk is as good an occupier of the road to India as an active Arab sovereign would be.¹¹²

Muhammad Ali could not have cared less about countries which spoke Arabic, which he himself did not, although he understood it, and he certainly had no affinity with Arabs, for he regarded himself as a Turk or an Ottoman. Ibrahim was the one who identified with Arabs, spoke Arabic and admired the Arabs where he despised the Ottomans and Turks. Neither did Muhammad Ali want to dismember the Ottoman empire, although he would not have minded had it been dismembered. He wanted control over these territories because they would give him independence first and foremost, and because they would set him up as a regional commercial and military power. Without the one he could not have the other.

Palmerston's worries over the road to India were justified. The previous year, following a mutiny on the part of some Egyptian regiment stationed in the Hijaz, Egyptian troops had followed the mutineers into the Yemen with the aim of subduing that territory and bringing it under Egyptian control. This would have extended Egyptian hegemony over the entire Red Sea littoral from Suez to Bab al-Mandib. Rumours circulated that the *wali* intended to send forces outside the Red Sea into the Persian Gulf, and thereby threaten the interests of the East India Company. He had also pushed for the reconquest of Najd to that end. These moves were motivated by lack of funds in Egypt and the desire to control more trade routes in order to refloat his economy, overwhelmed by too many demands.

The presence of a Russian army in the Bosphorus was a clear deterrent to Ibrahim's advance towards the capital. He could not hope to defeat the combined forces of Ottomans and Russians. 'The time to advance was right after Konia when to reach Istanbul was as easy as a drink of water', he wrote regretfully to his father.¹¹³

Meanwhile a diplomatic onslaught was carried out by the Powers. A new British consul in Egypt was primed with instructions specifying,

Her Majesty's Government attach great importance to the maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman empire, considering that state to be a material element in the general balance of power in Europe, and they are of opinion that any considerable encroachment upon the Asiatic territories of the Sultan, and a consequent defalcation from the resources which he might bring to bear for the defence of his European dominions, must operate in a corresponding degree upon his relative position with respect to neighbouring powers, and must

thereby have injurious bearing upon the general interests of Europe. His Majesty's Government therefore deem it of importance to prevent not only a dissolution but even a partial dismemberment of the Ottoman empire.¹¹⁴

The French government, though it did not wish for the dismemberment of the Ottoman empire, did not go as far as the British government in restraining the *wali*'s advances, but sought to limit his demands to Syria.

Suddenly the Porte acceded to the Egyptian demands and granted the *wali* the island of Crete and the four Syrian *pashaliks*, withholding the districts of Asia Minor, which did not satisfy the *wali*. The Powers brought pressure to bear on him to get him to accept these terms, but he demurred and asked them to guarantee 'Turkey from all aggression on my part, and at the same time to guarantee me from all aggression on her part'.¹¹⁵ This cannily meant that Europe would guarantee the integrity of Egypt, and it was turned down by the British government.

Palmerston had established the dogma of preserving the integrity of the Ottoman empire because he believed that that was in conformity with British interests. He believed that as it was crude to defend the Turkish empire on the pure plea of *realpolitik*, he would have to camouflage it under the guise of helping Turkey reform itself. Much later he said, 'Our power of maintaining the Turkish empire depends on Public Opinion in this country and that public opinion would not support us unless the Turkish government exerts itself to make reforms.'¹¹⁶ Yet Palmerston had little faith in Turkish reforms and had once cuttingly said, 'What energy can be expected of a people who have no heels to their shoes?' As far as he was concerned Muhammad Ali was a tiresome upstart who threatened British interests by his control of the eastern Mediterranean and his threat to embroil all of Europe in a war over the dismemberment of the Ottoman empire. Moreover, he was a threat to British interests in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, and had brought Russia into the Ottoman empire to sit on the banks of the Bosphorus. Support of such a person was sheer madness, to Palmerston, who knew that he would have to stop the Egyptian advance at some point if the Turks continued to give in to the *wali*'s demands.

On 3 May 1833, the Porte informed Ibrahim that they would invest him as governor of Adana, and the following day peace was officially declared. When the news reached Muhammad Ali, and Boghos entered the diwan to announce, 'Peace is concluded', consul Campbell, who was present, described what ensued. 'The Pasha started up with tears of joy in his eyes, and laying aside anything like Turkish gravity, burst into a sort of hysteric laugh.'¹¹⁷

Expansion to what end?

Syria, Adana and Candia (Crete) in place of Cyprus were granted to Muhammad Ali's son Ibrahim in return for a yearly tribute. The independence that Ibrahim so ardently desired was set aside by the father, who was bullied into accepting these terms by European insistence, and by their intransigence against his independence. The peace of Kutahia, which was not an official treaty, but an agreement between the sultan and his rebellious vassals to end a war, left Muhammad Ali and Ibrahim masters of an empire that spread from the Sudan and the Hijaz to Asia minor, an empire that in terms of sheer bulk rivalled the Ottoman empire.

Muhammad Ali's wars of expansion seemed to have paid off. He now controlled all the trade routes that led to and from Egypt; he had a navy and a merchant marine; and he dominated an area of land that could serve as his colonies and as a captive market for his mercantile activities. It is true that he had not achieved the much desired legal independence as a sovereign, but he still hoped to acquire that last plum at some future date. Kutahia was only an interlude, and Ibrahim, who ruled over Syria, knew that the game would be played out a few years later. What neither he nor his father suspected was that it would end the house of cards they had so carefully and meticulously built up when England blew up a storm that brought it all down around their ears.

The undoing: Muhammad Ali and Palmerston

The occupation of Syria was to create problems for Egypt, both local and international. The Porte was not reconciled to the loss of important provinces such as those of Syria and the region of Caramania, the underbelly of Anatolia. Still less was the Ottoman government reconciled to its defeat at the hands of an underling, a nefarious example that others in the empire might seek to emulate. The Porte had not waged war against the *derebeys* of Anatolia and the mamluks of Iraq successfully, only to accept defeat at the hands of a *wali*. The peace of Kutahia to the Porte was a temporary suspension of hostilities until the next round could be fought, and until the Powers, or some of them at least, could be won over to the Turkish point of view. There was no treaty signed at Kutahia, no formal agreement, simply the appointment of Ibrahim as governor of the provinces he had conquered on a yearly tenure; a position that in theory could be revoked at any time. In practice, only force of arms could make him relinquish the territories.

As far as Muhammad Ali was concerned, that peace was also a temporary one, a hiatus until he could attain complete independence. Yearly tenure was a tenuous position at best, and a constant threat at worst, especially were he to die. The viceroy was 64 years old, a hale and hearty man, but, given the short life expectancy of that period, he was already long past his prime. He could not expect many more years ahead of him, and he wanted to make sure that the edifice he had struggled to erect would not crumble once he was gone. Ibrahim, his obvious successor, was a capable and energetic man, even though he did not have the subtle mind of his father. Both men awaited the propitious moment to try a final bid for independence, with the approval, or connivance, of a Power. Right after Kutahia, Ibrahim had predicted that sooner or later he would come to blows with the Ottomans, and in spite of their new German-trained army he would defeat them and march back into Konia, if not into Istanbul itself. The father hoped to become independent long before that contingency.

The control of the Syrian provinces was no easy matter. The Syrians

had enjoyed a measure of freedom under local rulers like the Azms, or under *walis* who remained in office for a year and, having no power base and less authority, had left the provinces pretty much to their own devices. Such areas were not likely to accept passively a more centralized authority. Damascus in 1831, before the Egyptian occupation, had rebelled against a tax imposed by the Ottoman governor, and for forty days the city was ruled by the *aghawat*, the local military chiefs, and the local notables. Druze uprisings in the Hauran had kept Ibrahim's hands full for the first two years of his governorate. The Syrians would not accept the presence of a new regime out to exploit Syrian resources for its own ends, and the imposition of a monopoly system such as operated in Egypt went down badly with them. Syria had a large class of *tujjar*, of entrepreneurs and of compradors who resisted being cut out of their livelihood. The earlier upheavals against the Ottoman *wali*, and presently against Ibrahim, were precisely a struggle over the country's resources, a struggle that presaged more such attempts in the future.

The Hauran was a grain-producing region that had been under the control of the *aghawat* of Damascus, but was gradually coming under the control of the Druze inhabitants of the area.¹ These last were threatened with displacement by the Egyptians, the reason for their eventual uprising against the Egyptian occupation. Grain was an export commodity which gained in importance, especially after the July revolt in 1828 when France had abrogated the law prohibiting the importation of grain. From 1830 England, which had previously had little, if no relations with Syria and Lebanon, established consuls in Damascus, Beirut and Jerusalem, and exported cotton textiles and thread to Syria. These commodities were coming in through the overland route from Smyrna, which took over the main road for trade with Damascus and beyond.² The Syrians, who used to export cotton thread and textiles to France earlier, had turned to silk production when the French government in 1806 had placed a high tax on cotton and forbade the importation of cotton thread and *toiles de coton*.³ British merchants exported cotton cloth into Syria, which eventually competed with the local textile industry to its detriment. By 1839, for example, Britain exported more goods to Aleppo than France, and British cottons had replaced silk cloth in the area.⁴ In 1840 the textile industry in Syria produced £1,000,000 annually, with an estimated 4,000 looms weaving silk and silk and cotton (*alaja*) and 400 looms weaving cotton. Together the looms produced 10,913,704 square metres of silk cloth and 1,616,867 square metres of cotton cloth.⁵ Furthermore, the transit trade with Baghdad was booming. The commercial population with such a positive economic picture was not going to accept change passively. Syria's trade

was thriving; control over that trade was well worth fighting over on the part of the Ottomans, the Egyptians, the Syrians and also on the part of the British who were just moving into the region. Syria was a plum ripe for the plucking.

The Syrians were used to a certain degree of *laissez-faire* and free-wheeling. A number of Syrian rulers had tried bids for autonomy, and had succeeded for short periods of time, before the Ottomans re-exerted their influence on the provinces. Throughout that age the Syrians had thrived as *tujjar* and entrepreneurs, geared towards an export market. The Syrian Muslim merchants had developed an extensive network which dominated the transit trade both to the Anatolian region and to Iraq, Persia and the Hijaz. The coastal trade lay in the hands of the Syrian Christians and the European consuls-cum-merchants. Muhammad Ali tried to modify that system as he had done in Egypt. He sought to impose monopolies which would cut out some of the middlemen, leaving a small, chosen group of agents. His chosen agents were the Syrian Christians, for their contacts with the export market to Europe. He imposed a *firda* tax on the urban Muslims, who resented it for they had never paid a personal tax before and, equating it with the poll tax, found it demeaning and further resented his preferential treatment of minorities, their trading rivals, who had benefited from being *beratli*. Muhammad Ali, strongly oriented as he was to the export market, needed the *beratli* expertise and mercantile contacts.

The Syrians, though used to monopolies as a way of life within the Ottoman empire, were also expert at evading them by means of practices the Ottomans were too weak to halt. The new government under Ibrahim was more efficient than the Ottomans had been in imposing its will on the population, greatly assisted by the presence of an army of occupation. The new monopoly system threatened to destroy the traditional network and wipe out the vested interests that had grown up over the past decades within the mercantile community. Where the Syrians had been slowly shifting towards the European industrial system as suppliers of raw materials and as compradors, the new regime attempted to set up a core industrial system of its own over the eastern Mediterranean. That system continued to buy Syrian raw materials, but at a much lower rate than the European merchants had done, and yet exported foods and goods to Europe as well, so that the local merchants lost out on two steps of trade. There was little advantage to Syrian merchants in a system which accounted for and encouraged the artisans, and a select group of merchants who were coopted into the system, and cut out all the rest. The Egyptian occupation improved and expanded trade with Europe, but its very presence implied change, and the

siphoning off of material benefits into other than Syrian pockets. Neither the Syrian nor the British merchants relished that situation. Moreover, Muhammad Ali's rapprochement with the Syrian Christians at the expense of the Muslim merchants was to exacerbate the differences between these communities, which culminated in the conflicts of 1840-60 in Syria.

The crowning injury came when the *wali* ordered Ibrahim to conscript Syrians into the army. Ibrahim warned him that that would not work; they were newly installed in Syria and could not treat the population as they did in Egypt, but the *wali* would not listen. Local Syrian grievances might have come to nought, except to give the new governor a hard time, with which he might have been able to cope, had it not been for Ottoman and British interference. In time the Egyptian occupiers might have modified their system of rule. After all, when Muhammad Ali saw the objections that were raised in Syria and in Europe over the monopoly of silk, he rapidly rescinded the monopoly in 1835, although the government continued to exert a strict control over the direction of trade. By then trade was booming, especially through the port of Beirut, thanks to Egyptian efforts, and within five years Britain had doubled if not tripled her trade with Syria. This was not enough, and, in collusion with the Ottoman government, the British consul fanned the embers of dissent among the Syrian population into flames against the Egyptian occupation. No occupation is popular and this one, placing strictures on trade and organizing commerce, was threatening vested interests, and had not yet built a power base among the population, save amongst the Christian mercantile community.

Palmerston, who was secretary of state from 1827-9, 1830-4 and 1835-41, was disturbed by Muhammad Ali's expansion, the more so when he blamed it for bringing a Russian presence into the Mediterranean, contrary to British interests. Palmerston had gone as far as accusing the *wali* of having the 'best understanding with Russia', to which allegation the pasha retorted that he was not yet in his dotage to commit such an act of imbecility.⁶ But the prejudice against the pasha remained. Not only was the prejudice of a personal nature, Muhammad Ali being likened to a waiter at a coffee shop 'seeking to be commander of the Faithful',⁷ but also of an economic and political nature.

As Puryear pointed out, by the late 1830s there was an increased connection between politics and commerce, and the British government was ready to defend and to extend her commerce by war.⁸ Foreign economic policy throughout that period was directed towards expanding trade into new, undeveloped overseas regions, while at the same time retaining the local British agrarian system of protection, strongly

supported by a landowning parliament.⁹ Protective tariffs had sprung up all over the continent after the Napoleonic era in order to allow indigenous industries to develop. The fact that European markets were closing off to British goods meant the British were forced to look elsewhere for markets. Manchester manufacturers were obliged to live on 'shirts for black men and brown men and for the muslim world'.¹⁰ After 1825, protective tariffs elsewhere than in Europe came under attack by the Free Trade movement, which stood to gain from their downfall.

Palmerston was one of the few secretaries of state who was aware of the value of economics in government. As a young man he had studied economics with Dugald Stewart in Scotland, a major centre of political economy at the time. Although Dugald Stewart was not a supporter of the new school of political economy which believed England should base her economy not on land but on commerce, nonetheless Palmerston was exposed to the political economic currents of the day. With the Napoleonic blockade and with President Madison's denial of the United States as a market for British goods, he had become increasingly aware of Britain's needs for foreign markets. The internal situation within England called for more markets overseas as a means of staving off economic disaster within the country. Wakefield and his supporters were preaching colonies as the alternative to revolution.¹¹ Palmerston did not believe Wakefield's alternatives. He was himself a landowner who believed in agrarian economies; nonetheless he was won over to the Free Trade movement, and complacently reflected that 'backward peoples' would be improved by the 'general influence of our commerce'.¹² The White Man's Burden was in the making. Palmerston frequently reiterated his view that England was a commercial nation, a practical nation, one that acted only when British interests were at stake: 'we do not go in for chivalrous enterprises or fight for others as the French do'.¹³ It is doubtful that the French or anyone else ever did fight for others, but it would seem clear from that argument that British involvement in the Morea was dictated by British interests, as seen by the ruling elite, not entirely love of Greeks, Philhellenism, or any such emotional beliefs as were purveyed to the masses by the press of the day. Equally, Palmerston was a strong believer in the right of Britain to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries should British interests call for such an interference: '... if by interference is meant intermeddling and intermeddling in every way, and to every extent short of actual military force; then I must affirm that there is nothing in such interference which the laws of nations may not in certain cases permit'.¹⁴ He was to put these principles into practice against Muhammad Ali and

become his nemesis, because British interests, as Palmerston and the British industrialists saw them, demanded it.

As early as 1833 Palmerston had ordered a 'strong remonstrance against monopolies' which caused prejudice to British mercantile interests, even when British trade was already expanding in the region, with or without monopolies. From 1830 the overland route to India through the Mediterranean and the Red Sea had been established; trade with Syria flourished through the other overland route, providing new markets for the ailing British textile industry. An Ottoman *firman* in December 1835 gave British exporters extensive advantages when it abolished monopolies in Syria, and Britain paid a 1.5 per cent duty on exports from Syria.¹⁵ Palmerston was ready to enforce that treaty were Muhammad Ali to oppose it, but the latter gave in and accepted its terms. A weak sultan who acceded to British demands and was no potential rival to British trade or to the security of British trade routes was a better ally than a strong monarch who had commercial interests of his own, whose textile industry was growing, and who dominated the potential markets that Britain coveted. Such a rival was dangerous and would have to go, no matter what facilities he offered or what conditions he was ready to accept. After 1835 steam shipping became important and developed the need for coaling stations along the route to India, that is in the Arabian Peninsula, another reason to wish for the demise of Muhammad Ali.

Muhammad Ali tried to woo British friendship by promising all manner of facilities to British trade. His envoy, the British merchant Briggs, pleaded his case with Palmerston, pointing out how much the pasha could favour British trading interests. Briggs, who made a handsome living in Egypt since his profits in the Egyptian cotton trade in 1832 came to more than \$100,000,¹⁶ had a hard time convincing Palmerston. The secretary of state could see little advantage to Britain in breaking up the Ottoman empire, which he believed to be an inevitable consequence of any Egyptian pretensions at independence, or in nurturing a strong and potential rival to British trade. Muhammad Ali's hints at independence in 1834 fell on very deaf ears. The viceroy was warned of the 'fatal consequences' of such a step to himself and was assured that the Powers would not tolerate it.¹⁷ Campbell reported that the *wali* would not rest until he had achieved his independence from the Porte, and that his ambitions might tempt him to take Baghdad and 're-establish an Arab caliphate in his own family'. An Arab caliphate *per se* did not worry Palmerston, but the spread of Egyptian hegemony over Iraq and the Persian Gulf did. T. Waghorn, steam agent in Egypt in 1837, wrote a pamphlet entitled *Egypt As It is*, in which he pleaded with

his government to acknowledge 'Egypt as a separate and independent kingdom ...'¹⁸ because it would be to British advantage. The pamphlet, an eloquent plea for British support of Egyptian independence, was based on British commercial interests. The pamphlet was presented to Palmerston and the author refused to make it public because he hoped that Egypt would gain her independence by 1837. When this did not happen, he published the pamphlet the following year, hoping to sway public opinion, but to no avail.

By May 1838 Muhammad Ali announced his determination to declare the independence of Egypt and Syria as a hereditary kingdom and even offered to pay the Porte 3 million pounds as the price of his independence. The foreign consuls advised restraint until they had received directives from their governments. Palmerston despatched a warning,

The British Government ... feels itself bound ... to declare ... if he should unfortunately proceed to execute his announced intentions; and if hostilities should (as they indisputably would) break out thereupon between the Sultan and the Pasha, the Pasha must expect to find Great Britain taking part with the Sultan in order to obtain redress for so flagrant a wrong done to the Sultan, and for the purpose of preventing the Dismemberment of the Turkish empire.¹⁹

The French government, which was acting in concert with the British government, warned the pasha not to proceed on a path that might lead to peril and ruin.²⁰

Meanwhile the British government took steps to contain the *wali* by sapping the financial roots of his strength. They believed that if the *wali* were divested of his monopolies, he would have fewer funds with which to finance an army and consequently would have his teeth drawn. That at least was the argument presented to the Ottoman government, when the British embassy at the Porte approached them with a proposal for negotiating a new trade agreement between the two governments. The Ottoman government bought the argument and the outcome was the treaty of Balta Liman, signed in the summer of 1838.²¹

The treaty was to be a nail in the coffin of all monopolies within the Ottoman empire, including those of Egypt. The Ottomans, who had practised a monopoly system for generations, agreed to revise that system in the mistaken belief that it would be more adverse to Muhammad Ali's interests than to their own. They hoped it would bring him into direct confrontation, even conflict, with the European Powers, should he disobey and refuse to cancel his monopolies.²² The treaty dealt with two separate elements: the abolition of monopolies and a new customs tariff. Ironically enough, the *wali*, whose finances by 1838 were in bad shape through the continuous drain on his resources

by wars, industrial projects and public works, had been forced to abandon some of his monopolies and in due course might have returned to a system of free trade.²³ As far as he was concerned the negative aspects of the treaty did not lie in its abolition of monopolies, but in the clauses dealing with customs tariffs.

By its terms the treaty admitted all foreign goods into the empire with a 3 per cent duty and a new *ad valorem* interior duty of 9 per cent. All exports had a 3 per cent export duty plus a new interior duty of 2 per cent. Internal taxes on imported goods by foreigners were abolished. Palmerston claimed that in the long run the abolition of monopolies would increase the revenues of Egypt and the Ottoman empire, presumably through increased traffic, '... though it may for the moment paralyse Muhammad Ali's scheme of finance'.²⁴ The treaty was in fact to be a disaster to the Ottoman empire even more than to Egypt, for it restricted the government's right to tax, or even pre-empt goods it needed. Bulwer in a letter to Addington wrote that the treaty was to give aliens such extensive commercial privileges as would be likely to crush her [Ottoman] indigenous industry.²⁵ It was Bulwer who negotiated the terms of the treaty and he well knew what he was talking about.

Once the treaty was applied to Egypt, after 1840, it allowed European merchants free rein in the market, and through the Capitulations in time it gave them virtual control of that market. Secondly, the terms of the treaty encouraged an influx of cheap British goods into the area, which killed local industries. In Egypt the infant industries could not compete without protective barriers, and in Syria the industries could not compete with cheaper goods either, although their industry, older and more established, resisted much longer. As a result both countries' economies became inevitably geared to becoming suppliers of raw materials to Europe and importers of finished European goods. Egypt was in time reduced to the position of a poor and dependent participant in the European world market, a position mitigating any pretensions at economic independence, let alone at political hegemony over the eastern Mediterranean, the Levant or the Red Sea areas.

The terms of the treaty implied a support for the Ottoman empire, which in turn had allowed the expansion of British trade in the area, so that subversion of the empire in any manner entailed in direct consequence the decrease of British trade, or so it seemed to British interests. The French ambassador at the Porte called the treaty 'a complete commercial revolution', since the rates of taxation on some articles were diminished tenfold. France's suspicions towards Britain were raised by the treaty, and they believed it contained a secret clause which promised the sultan military aid against the Egyptians in return for

his commercial concessions. A decade later Palmerston was to declare in the House of Commons, 'If in a political point of view the independence of Turkey is of great importance, in a commercial sense it is of no less importance to this country. It is quite true that with no country is our trade so liberally permitted and carried on as with Turkey.'²⁶

Muhammad Ali was fully aware of the consequences to Egyptian commerce and finances were he to apply the terms of the treaty to Egypt, and refused to abide by them, much to the anger of the Powers. Nothing could be done for the time being because an armed clash between Egyptians and Ottomans seemed to be preparing. In that eventuality Palmerston was prepared to coerce Egypt. He explained his attitude to Granville, saying,

Coercion of Mehemet Ali by England if war broke out might appear partial and unjust; but we are partial; and the great interests of Europe require that we should be so. The maintenance of the Turkish empire ought to be the basis of our policy; for its maintenance is essential for the preservation of peace, and for the upholding of the independence of Eastern Europe. A partition of Turkey would be fatal to the independence of Austria and Prussia, when it was accomplished, and it could not be accomplished without a general war. No ideas therefore of fairness towards Mehemet ought to stand in the way of such great and paramount interests.²⁷

That the dismemberment of the Ottoman empire might have led to a war in Europe, as the states scrambled for their share of the booty, may have been undoubted, but the independence of Egypt and Syria did not necessarily mean the dismemberment of the empire any more than the independence of Greece and Serbia did. The question was not over the dismemberment of Turkey, convenient though that was as an excuse; the question was over the creation of a new power in the Mediterranean, and an active and extensive power at that, with close links to France.

The viceroy had given his son strict orders not to attack the Ottomans first, and at one time seemed to believe that the Ottomans did not intend to go to war. Ibrahim disagreed and pointed out that they were inciting unrest in the Hauran, in Aintab and in the Kurdish mountains. He was convinced that he would have to repel the Ottomans before their intrigues succeeded in fomenting uprisings everywhere in Syria.²⁸ Nevertheless he ordered his men not to come within five hours of the frontiers, and not to provoke the Turks or shoot at them. The Ottomans, however, crossed the Euphrates river, planning to catch Ibrahim's army from the rear, and, as Ibrahim had predicted, fighting broke out between the two armies once more. The Ottoman army, in spite of its new German training, was yet again defeated by Ibrahim in the battle of Nezib in June 1839.

Once the battle was over Ibrahim determined to push on to Konia, but his father sent him strict orders to stay on his side of the Taurus mountains until he could determine what effect the victory had on the Powers. Sultan Mahmud had died before news of the defeat could reach him and was succeeded by his 16-year-old son, Abdul Mejid.

Had Ibrahim pushed on towards Konia and points further, there is little doubt that he would have been successful and the Ottomans would have capitulated to his demands, as indeed they were ready to do right after Nezib. Muhammad Ali was afraid of the international repercussions that further advances into Ottoman territory might entail. He hoped the Powers would fulfil his desires without any further bloodshed. There may also have been an element of ambiguity on his part towards the Ottomans and the empire. Though he ardently wished for political and economic independence for his territories, he may not have desired the destruction of the Ottoman throne. He was on the horns of a dilemma. He still regarded himself as an Ottoman, and, in spite of his rebellion against his suzerain and his desire for independence, he continued psychologically to regard the sultan as his suzerain and the Ottomans as his people, if only they would leave him alone and stop meddling in his plans – a dilemma resembling that faced by the American revolutionaries against England. Ibrahim, on the contrary, did not regard himself as an Ottoman; he had little liking for the Ottomans, perhaps as a consequence of his year's stay as a hostage in Istanbul when a young man, and less loyalty towards them. He constantly paraded his 'Egyptian-ness', vaunted the valour of his Egyptian soldiers, with whom he lived and whose language he spoke fluently. Whereas Muhammad Ali believed his wars had been won through force of Ottoman arms, for all the officers were Ottoman, Ibrahim chose to believe that he had won his battles through the valour of his Egyptian soldiers, and had no scruples about destroying the Ottoman empire if that was necessary. Ibrahim, one must remember, spent his time out in the field, aloof from European pressures, although emissaries did pursue him there, while Muhammad Ali was daily under pressure from the consuls who bombarded him with warnings and advised him to stand still pending negotiations.

Such negotiations as were pursued were clearly to be in favour of the Ottomans and a means of restraining further Egyptian advance. After Nezib the Egyptian *wali* and his son made further demands on the Ottomans. Ibrahim's notions of 'secure boundaries' towards the east had expanded to include Diyar Bekir and Urfa, from whence the Ottoman army had crossed the Euphrates to attack his position. He determined that his future boundaries should be the entire frontier

between Anatolia and the Arab provinces south of the Taurus mountains. Such control would also give him dominion over northern Iraq, and both the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Urfa was important for its proximity to the desert and to the bedouin tribes who remained a potential source of sedition and a thorn in his flesh. He had previously suffered from Arab uprisings in the Hauran, incited by the Ottomans, and in Aintab and the Kurdish mountains. The only means to stamp out future sedition in these territories would be to bring them under his direct control.²⁹ The territories claimed by Ibrahim were of prime strategic importance vis-à-vis the Ottoman armies, but they were also economically valuable in themselves, lying on the trade routes going from east to west, and constituting a potential stepping-stone south into Iraq.

By Palmerston's standards these demands were too much, even the Egyptian victory was too much. An Egyptian presence in northern Syria was a direct threat to British interests, for it clearly presaged an impending take-over of Iraq and the territories of the Persian Gulf, in which direction the Egyptian armies in the Hijaz had been moving. To make matters even worse, an Englishman, Chesney, had presented a project for putting a fleet of steamships on the Euphrates which would connect by direct railway to Alexandretta, thereby offering a route from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean as an alternative to going through Egypt and the Red Sea.³⁰ With Egyptian forces in control of the Red Sea and of the region of the Euphrates river and Aleppo, as well as a large expanse of Mediterranean coastline, the whole project would fall under the control of Muhammad Ali, who would dominate both routes to India. The trade of the Levant would be at the mercy of the Egyptian monarch and his armies.

Sultan Mahmud had been under the influence of the British ambassador Stratford Canning. The new sultan, a mere boy, would be even more pliable, and was at least not a wily old fox believed to be under French influence. The Ottomans and their commercial links were no match for British trade, but Muhammad Ali could well become a tiresome rival. For all these reasons, Muhammad Ali, having won the war against the Ottomans, was to lose the peace through British initiatives and intrigues.

The Ottomans, who had lost their sultan at a most inopportune moment, and whose new ruler was young and untried, had prepared a message to be delivered to the victors which acceded to all their demands. The British government prevented the Ottomans from sending that message and urged them to do nothing and leave matters in their hands. Palmerston then rallied the Powers – even Russia – who all,

except for France, responded to his call. France favoured the demands made by Muhammad Ali, since they aided French policy, and posed no threat to her interests. France, in occupation of Algeria, believed a strong ally on the other end of the Mediterranean would further her interests, and their combined fleets would become the strongest in the Mediterranean, outflanking the British fleet. Muhammad Ali had boasted of having 'the most magnificent fleet ever owned by a Mahomedan power'.³¹ Thiers, the French foreign minister, was all in favour of supporting Egypt, even if it meant a showdown with Britain. Palmerston, however, gambled on the weakness of Louis-Philippe's position. He knew the French monarch feared a coup d'état that would oust him from the throne, and that that fear would prevent him from going to war with England over Egypt, especially were England to promise him support in case of a coup.

From this time, 1839, onwards Palmerston's tone of patronizing indifference to Muhammad Ali changed to one of virulence and moral outrage at the rebellious vassal. In a letter that was a masterpiece of casuistry, he wrote,

... the Sultan is the sovereign and though he may have been the aggressor still he has right on his side. There was no *treaty* at Kutahya. There could be none; the parties there were a sovereign and a rebel – no treaty can be made between such parties – There was indeed an agreement, and the Sultan transferred certain governments upon Muhammad and Ibrahim. But those governments were given during pleasure, and the Sultan had the right to resume them ... it was for the advantage of every Power in Europe except Russia that the Sultan should be able to reassume what he then conferred.³²

In another letter he wrote, '... there is no question of fairness towards Mehemet ... a robber is always liable to be made to disgorge'. In a letter to Granville, Palmerston wrote,

For my part I hate Mehemet Ali, whom I consider as nothing but an ignorant barbarian, who by cunning and boldness and mother wit has been successful in rebellion ... I look upon his boasted civilization of Egypt as the arrantest humbug; and I believe that he is as great a tyrant and oppressor as ever made a people wretched.³³

When consul Campbell praised Muhammad Ali, he was reproved by Palmerston for expressing opinions opposed to the sentiments of the British government and removed from his position in September 1839.

The wretchedness of the Egyptians was of little consequence to Palmerston, who simply dragged in moral arguments as rationalizations whenever they were needed, for between the wretchedness of the Egyptians under the Ottomans and under Muhammad Ali there was a

definite tilt in favour of the *wali*. Other 'rebels' against the Ottomans might be supported, especially if they were Christian rebels against the Muslim sultan, like the Greeks or Mikhailovic in Serbia; it was not the principle of rebellion that exercised Palmerston, but in that case it was the policies of the 'rebel'. To justify to British public opinion interference in that instance of Ottoman–Egyptian affairs, Palmerston sought to discredit the person of Muhammad Ali along with his policies, and so resorted to *ad hominem* arguments. From being a ruler, Muhammad Ali was demoted into becoming a 'rebel', a 'robber' and an 'ignorant barbarian', when he was not a 'waiter in a coffee shop', whereas the sultan was raised to the status of a long and ancient dynast, one Palmerston likened to an ancient tree that would continue to thrive long after upstarts had been cut down.

In 1839 Bowring had been sent by Palmerston to report to Parliament on Egypt and Syria. His report contained passages in praise of the *wali*'s achievements in both countries. Bowring had suggested that Egypt's independence be recognized, because that would earn the gratitude of the *wali* who would join the sultan in an alliance against the Russians and facilitate the lines of communication to India. Palmerston, who had resolved to bring down the viceroy, in a separate memorandum of 2 February 1840 had written, 'I wish the manuscript of the Egyptian and Syrian report to be looked over with care, and that any passages of a political tendency and which may have a bearing on the question now pending may be marked and submitted to me. Under this head would come any exaggerated praises of Mehemet Ali.'³⁴ Parliament was not to be swayed by praises of the *wali* but pushed into acting against him.

Campbell, who had been recalled from Egypt, was also asked to write a report on the country, and there too any praise of Muhammad Ali was scorned by Palmerston. Where Campbell wrote that all the Englishmen in the service of Ibrahim Pasha were 'warmly attracted to him', Palmerston commented in the margin, 'Ibrahim is well known to hate England and the English.'³⁵ Further snide remarks in the margin impugned the honesty and sense of justice of the *wali*. When Bowring reported that 10,000 students had been sent to Europe to be educated, Palmerston crossed out the number and wrote, 'some thousands' in its place, adding in the margin, 'probably is a considerable exaggeration'. Throughout the memorandum Palmerston's animosity towards the *wali*, founded on his obvious bias against the man, comes out clearly.

Muhammad Ali had given British interests too many jolts. In the late 1820s he posed a threat with his projects for cotton development and textile mills, and the expansion of his fleet. Navarino was the riposte. In

the next decade he continued to be a source of worry in the eastern Mediterranean and the Red Sea with his control of shipping, commerce, and his protective tariffs that were supposed to be closing markets in the face of British goods (though in fact they did not) at a time when Britain desperately needed new markets. He controlled both routes to India, which was an acute economic threat, and his projects seemed to favour France and thus served to undercut Britain's strategic and economic position further. The British government had good reason to fear that an alliance between France and Egypt would dominate the entire Mediterranean and squeeze England out of the Sea, for the French had declared they '... meant to establish a new second rate maritime power in the Mediterranean, whose fleet might unite with that of France for the purpose of serving as a counterpoise to that of England'.³⁶ Politically Muhammad Ali's projects could bring France and England to another war. The climax came on 7 July when the Ottoman navy defected to the Egyptian side. The combined fleets posed a serious danger of a formidable naval force in the Mediterranean.

The Powers sought ways and means to settle the situation, egged on and harried by Palmerston, who, from then, until the Conference of London was held on 15 July 1840, deftly wooed the French monarch. He wished to maintain Muhammad Ali as a vassal and strip him of most of his conquests. Metternich, on the other hand, had suggested they strip the *wali* of his Ottoman territories but declare him independent, which Palmerston refused to accept.

Muhammad Ali hoped that the French, who up to then had given him their support, would help him out. Ibrahim had even written to his father to say that, if it came to open conflict, they would expect the French to help them militarily and they should officially notify them of that expectation.³⁷ The internal situation in France was not too secure. There were rumours of an attempted coup against Louis-Philippe, and, although Thiers was in favour of supporting Muhammad Ali for purely French political reasons, Louis-Philippe was reluctant. Palmerston, who had to cope with a divided cabinet, half of whom feared a war with France and the other half of whom admired the secretary of state's firmness, gambled that Louis-Philippe would be swayed to their side and not go to war. The gamble paid off and on 15 July the Powers signed the act for the 'Pacification of the Levant', with a reserved protocol spelling out the coercive measures to be used against the Egyptian *wali* to force his acceptance of their terms.

The French government made violent statements in support of Muhammad Ali but did nothing, and a month later it too signed the act. Later on Louis-Philippe said, 'Mr Thiers is furious with me, because I

did not want to go to war. He tells me that I talked of going to war; but talking of going to war and going to war are two very different things.³⁸

The sultan sent Muhammad Ali an ultimatum on 16 August and ordered the withdrawal of the Egyptian forces from Syria, giving him Acre and south Syria for life, and Egypt to himself and to his heirs. Muhammad Ali refused. When a blockade was mentioned he scoffed at it and said that he was self-sufficient and would, should the British forces land in Egypt, charge them with as much gusto as he had done three decades earlier. But this was brave talk. The British fleet sailed to Beirut, where Napier announced to Sulaiman Pasha, the governor, that he had orders to stop all ships sailing between Egypt and Syria. Pamphlets were distributed all over the territory inciting the populations of Beirut, Saida, Jerusalem, Arish and Gaza to rise in revolt against the Egyptians.³⁹ The populations, disgruntled by conscription, taxes, commercial policies and policies of disarming them, responded readily to a call for revolt. The consuls attempted to bribe Sulaiman Pasha to defect to the Ottoman side and, when he refused, Beirut was bombarded on 11 September 1840 and an Anglo-Turkish force landed. Uprisings broke out all over Syria, encouraged by news of a landing.

During the previous year Ibrahim had warned his father that if uprisings were to break out in different parts of the country there was no way he could hold on to the territory. Once again his predictions proved true. With a force landed in Syria, uprisings breaking out in a number of places, with a naval blockade of the Mediterranean preventing supplies from reaching him, there was no way Ibrahim could hold his ground. The best he could do was retreat to Egypt, with as much of his army as he could.

When the British fleet appeared outside Muhammad Ali's bedroom window in Alexandria, the *wali* realized he was beaten. He could have battled it out to the last man, but without French support he decided the wisest policy was to cut his losses and concentrate on making Egypt a hereditary kingdom for his family rather than risk all in a war with the Powers.

Ibrahim's army returned to Egypt, some on British ships, for Napier took a fancy to Muhammad Ali and tried to plead his case. The grand design of an empire and of hegemony over the Mediterranean evaporated. The treaty of 1841 which the pasha was constrained to accept stripped him of all his conquests save the Sudan and the hereditary *pashalik* of Egypt for life, succession, according to Ottoman custom, going to the eldest male in the family. Without embargoes, a captive market, and a large army to use up much of the manufactured goods, Egyptian industrialization slowed down, and most of the war-related

industries were dismantled. The Egyptian economic effort from henceforth became geared to turning the country into an export market for agricultural products, as all the European experts had been urging the Egyptian government to do. Egypt was to be an agricultural country and to export her raw materials to Europe, where they were to be manufactured and sold back to Egypt as finished products.

The commercial bias against Muhammad Ali was made clear by Consul Murray, who believed that Egypt would gain by destroying her industries and importing all her manufactures from Europe. Murray explained that there were no more than 40,000 industrial workers in Egypt, who were secure from conscription and could be returned to agricultural labour. He commented that the 'Arabs enter with pleasure into the levies for Manufacture although badly paid – but this probably is caused by the feeling that it will shield them from military levies'. He added that the 'Egyptians show great aptitude for all Mechanical works, and although what is made in the Arsenals and Workshops of Cairo and Alexandria is inferior to what is made in most parts of Europe, and above all in England ... it is still good and serviceable', yet in the same breath he advocated the cessation of these same 'good and serviceable' manufactures and the importation of all necessary goods from abroad. The reasons for such a contradiction is quite simple, and is summed up in a sentence that is a value judgement that belied his previous estimation of Egyptian manufactures: 'Muhammad Ali, after enormous expenses for erecting Manufactories ... has failed in his projects.' How he failed, or on what criteria Murray based his judgement of failure is never explained, but the following sentence is illuminating: 'He will learn by experience ... if peace be established, that they [indigenous manufactories] prevent the introduction of European capital into Egypt, and the foundation of permanent establishments in that country.'⁴⁰

The *wali* had established manufactories in Egypt because he neither wanted an influx of European goods nor of European capital, and still less did he want the permanent establishment of that capital in his country. All his plans had been geared towards preventing such a consummation. After the treaty of Balta Liman had stripped him of fiscal protection, the treaty of 1841 had left him without international protection and put him at the mercy of the Powers and the Porte once again. His attempts at economic self-sufficiency and industrialization were to be arrested, and in their place he was assured of a permanent influx of foreign capital and foreign goods, which would indubitably deprive the country of any financial and economic independence.

Muhammad Ali still hoped to outwit the powers economically, and

Egypt in the reign of Muhammad Ali

hold onto the hereditary *pashalik* of Egypt. Once the treaty of 1841 had been signed and the *wali* established as hereditary pasha of Egypt, his next moves were directed towards keeping the encroachments of European trade and commerce within the bounds of reason. His monopolies were no longer legal, his embargoes had been disbanded; how then could he protect his country from falling completely under European commercial domination? For the next eight years the *wali* spent his energies towards that purpose and towards establishing a well-oiled and efficient administrative machinery that would survive his demise.

The aftermath

The frustrations of these few months might have destroyed a less determined man than Muhammad Ali, or at least might have broken his spirit. Many historians have assumed that his spirit indeed was broken, and have claimed that he lost interest in his industries and his schools after 1840, when the momentum slowed down. That was not the case. Internal changes did take place after 1841, but they were necessitated by the changing circumstances of the country and its changing financial potential.

Before the Syrian débâcle the Egyptian government had been heading towards expansion overseas and control of trade routes, if not of the resources of the countries they had occupied. After 1841 expansion was replaced by contraction to the territories of Egypt and the Sudan. Egypt no longer controlled trade routes, and had to rely on her own resources or on normal trade patterns. This affected Egyptian industry as did the new trade tariffs that were now imposed.

Prior to 1841 Egypt had a large army that reached well over 100,000 men (some figures, e.g., those of Sami, give twice that number). While that army had siphoned manpower away from agriculture and industry, such a large army consumed the products of the new industries in terms of cloth for uniforms, leather for boots, saddles and gear, firearms and gunpowder, cannon and ships, and all the products of the arsenals and shipyards in terms of sails, ropes, copper plates, metal ware, etc. In brief, all the war-related industries, which frequently have been the start of many countries on the path to industrialization, came to a resounding halt when the Egyptian army was legally curtailed to 18,000 men. Where it was economically sound for a country to manufacture the requirements of a large army, it was no longer economically sound to manufacture such products for an exiguous army, unless that country were to export these manufactures and become an arms supplier, such as Belgium was, or a ship-building nation. This Egypt could not profitably do, for the competition was too strong.

As for other industries like cotton, silk and wool, these continued to

function at a lesser pace, and to turn out stuffs that could be consumed internally. Since the Egyptian government could no longer impose Egyptian textiles as an export item on their former 'colonies', they had to compete on the open market with all other textiles and were rapidly displaced by those from Britain. British textiles benefited from the new tariff differential, which gave them a 9-per-cent edge on local goods, and also from the fact that British merchants were lending the compradors money so that they could buy up local raw materials for export. Egyptian merchants could not offer the same financially interesting terms, and could not compete. In these circumstances Egyptian textiles were to diminish in importance, and, while they did not die out as some historians would have us believe, nonetheless they diminished production quite sensibly.

We can then assume that the factories that were closed down after 1841 were closed not because the *wali* had lost interest in them, but because they no longer had any markets for their goods. The *wali* tried to stave off these changes for as long as he could by various devices whereby he sought to outwit his foreign competition. The first such device was to tie the land-owning element in the country closer to himself and to his family by rewarding them financially. The means of establishing such rewards came with changes in the land-tenure laws.

In 1836 a new land system called the *uhda* had been set up in response to a pressing need for money (see chapter 6); by 1844 nearly one million faddans had been distributed as *uhda* lands, which were also distributed to foreign merchants as well – Zizinia for instance. Large areas of land known as *ibadiyya* had been granted free of taxes, so long as they were brought under cultivation. By 1837 *ibadiyyat* were subject to inheritance, and by 1842 they became private property. Around that period of time, grants of land to members of the ruling family were made. These *cafalik* as they were called, had been allowed usufructuary rights only, but by 1842 a law was promulgated on Muharram 5, which turned them into full property rights. Artin assumed that by these means Muhammad Ali hoped to develop a 'noblesse terrienne' that would be loyal to his family and support the throne, as in other parts of the world. Yet when we look closer at the list of landowners we cannot fail but note that the largest landowners were the members of Muhammad Ali's own family, who at least were presumably on his side.

We might make a number of assumptions about the new land changes. The first and most obvious is that the *wali* was setting his children up with private property, in case they were ousted from power, or replaced. In that case, purely usufructuary property would have been forfeit or confiscated. A second reason was that he may have wanted to

satisfy the members of his family, and it was perfectly normal Ottoman procedure to give large tracts of land to one's relations – all sultans had done it. Another reason that may be adduced was that since Muhammad Ali had been forced to give up his monopoly system, he had probably seen the writing on the wall after the treaty of 1838, and he had taken steps to insure that, although he could no longer legally impose monopolies, he could still control a large share of the country's produce by the simple means of giving tracts of land to his relatives and retainers, on the understanding that these new landowners would naturally sell their produce to the government. This was the case.

The foreign merchants, who after 1841 expected Egypt to become a free market, were surprised and indignant to find that the pasha had sewed up the market tight, and that if they wanted to buy anything, they still had to go through him, for no one would sell to them directly. The French consul, Vattier de Bourville, in 1842 realized what was in the offing when he reported, 'My doubt, or rather my fear, comes from the means the Egyptian government possesses to corner, impede, monopolize everything while seeming to respect the principle. The distribution of villages by His Highness to the members of his family and the court shows his intention well enough so that it is easy to predict the necessary consequences of that precaution.'¹ Bourville added that that would hurt 'small business' only, because the large houses of commerce preferred to trade directly with the government. This explains why the treaty of Balta Liman was more popular among the members of the British administration than among the British merchants trading with Egypt, who had opposed it. Bourville continued his report, stating, 'the freedom of articles released from monopoly is illusory. The members of the pasha's family will appropriate the best lands and distribute them to their creatures, and the government could always monopolize for itself the articles in question. On the other hand if one takes into account the hindrances constantly brought by the provincial authorities to the [free] navigation and circulation of merchandise, one understands that trade and the producers will gain little from this so-called new order.'

Even better, article 3 of the treaty stipulated that any local article bought by a foreign merchant would be subject to the same duties that were paid 'by the most favoured class of Turkish subjects engaged in the internal trade'.² This clause allowed Muhammad Ali to subject the French and British merchants to a new internal tariff. The French consul moaned in dismay, 'it is almost impossible for monopoly to be wholly banished from Egypt'.³ The new tariff, of 12 per cent, was imposed at Bulaq and Cairo on articles that had till then never paid taxes, such as butter, wheat, beans, lentils, maize and barley. Mooring

charges for the boats coming from Upper Egypt and Bulaq also had to be paid.

French annoyance stemmed from the fact that the *wali* continued to buy up all the cotton that was grown in the country and to sell it back to the merchants abroad. That is, he was acting as a merchant and selling his goods directly in Europe, cutting out the European merchants. Equally galling were the duties he imposed on transit goods and on imported goods.⁴

The British consul was just as unhappy as his French opposite number, and for the same reasons, although the *wali* had given a concession to the British government which allowed the Peninsular and Oriental steamship line (which had become chartered to take the Red Sea route from India) to land at Suez. The passengers and goods were then trans-shipped by land from Suez to Alexandria. This arrangement was settled by September 1841 in return for a stated annual sum paid to the Egyptian government.⁵

1841 and 1842 were bad years for Egypt in more ways than one. The Egyptian debts mounted to 80 million francs (or £2,400,000). The flood was high and drowned crops and villages and, while a slight improvement followed, the next year, 1844, brought in a cattle murrain that ravaged the country's herds. The combination of these events exacerbated arrears of taxation, and caused extreme hardship among the fallahin. Sharif Pasha, the head of the diwan al-maliyya, or the minister of finances, was too scared to tell the *wali* the true state of financial affairs, which was little short of disastrous. He concerted with Ibrahim Pasha, and it seems that together they drew up a report to the council revealing the facts. Tax arrears came to 14,081,500 pts. out of a total estimated tax of 75,227,500 pts. The report stated that villages could not pay their taxes, and recommended that the debts of the villages be remitted.⁶

It was alleged that the report was first leaked to the *wali* by his daughter in order to cushion the shock. Such a step made the *wali* suspect that he had been duped, and that it was a first move preliminary to getting rid of him. In a rage he railed at the council, and accused two unnamed, but clearly identifiable members, one of being a *ghaddar* (traitor), and the other of being a *tama* (greedy). He said that he wanted these men delivered to him, that he was resigning as pasha of Egypt and would retire to Mecca to spend his days in contemplation; he then stalked out of the council. The man accused of treachery was Ibrahim and the one of greed, Sharif, presumably because of a suspicion that he had pocketed the missing funds himself. Muhammad Ali sailed off to Cairo and shut himself up at his palace in Shubra. The British consul failed to

understand the ramifications of the incident, as did the other consuls, who all reported that from 1841 the *wali* suffered bouts of insomnia and fits of anger and that his mind was shaken and dulled, a normal enough state considering the disappointments he had just suffered and the major set-backs to his schemes. However, in 1844 we are informed through the reports of the Greek consul, Anastasi, that Muhammad Ali had suffered fits of agitation and a collapse during which he swore to retire from government. Six days later the consul reported that the melancholia dropped from the pasha, his mind cleared, he inflicted a fine on those who had incurred his wrath and went back to business as usual.

That account rings untrue. To suffer a bout of melancholia does not lead a man into an outbreak of rage, which is then followed by imposing a fine on his officials. There is a missing link somewhere. The consuls were simply unaware of the real issues at stake and attributed the *wali's* anger to a mental condition, when it was nothing of the sort, but was a fit of rage motivated by political reasons. Nubar in his memoirs, which are invaluable because he was then Ibrahim Pasha's private secretary, recounts that the pasha had become upset because the council had queried taxes and procedures of administration. He added that Ibrahim in consequence feared for his life, as did Sharif. Ibrahim received a letter from his father full of accusations, and the former told his people, among whom was Nubar, that he was innocent of these accusations, and wanted to be buried with the letter on his breast. He went to see his father and ordered his mamluks to loosen their sabres when they entered the palace, and to strike at whomever gave an order for an attack against his person. By that account Nubar implied that Ibrahim had ordered his mamluks to strike the *wali* himself were he to order an attack against his son. No such attack was ordered and the meeting ended in a reconciliation between the two men, although both Ibrahim and Sharif paid large sums of money to the government.⁷

We are not quite sure what the reasons behind that incident were, nor the connection of Ibrahim with it, but it is likely that the incident was a culmination of bad feeling between the *wali* and his son. This had been exacerbated by the intrigues of Abbas, who may have whispered to his grandfather that Ibrahim had either taken state funds or had withheld them with the connivance of Sharif, that they were both plotting to defraud the *wali* or even to unseat him.

While Ibrahim was occupied with the Syrian expedition, Abbas was advanced to high administrative rank and named *kikhya*, or executive assistant to the *wali*. This gave Abbas the opportunity to gather round him a group of supporters, mostly from among officials who were opposed to the *wali's* policies of modernization and industrialization,

which they believed cost the state much money. These officials, and we can only surmise as to who they were, were large landowners who were interested in seeing the establishment of a free market, by which they could offer their produce at the highest going price, rather than see it sold at a fixed rate to the government, which made the larger profit by reselling the produce for export. These officials may have been won over to that viewpoint by the foreign consuls and foreign merchants, who could not have helped but point out the advantages accruing to the landowners from a system of free trade.

Abbas detested his uncle, who humiliated him and never attempted to hide his contempt for him, and the nephew made a concerted effort to oppose all of his uncle's projects and policies. Whereas Ibrahim led a progressive faction, and was enthralled by anything to do with machinery and industry, Abbas represented a conservative, reactionary wing in the administration, that neither understood industrialization nor cared to. Probably Abbas' support came from the old traditional Ottoman group, while Ibrahim was popular among the new, progressive administrators and the army. The animosity between the two men surfaced when Ibrahim returned from Syria to find that in his absence he had been displaced in the administration by his nephew, who had become a power with which he would have to contend.

During the Syrian campaign ill-feeling had been bred between Ibrahim and his father. Ibrahim had written one too many acerbic letters to his father, complaining of lack of funds, lack of cannon and men and lack of action, so that for a while all communication between the two men was conducted through the *bash muarwin*, for the *wali* refused to correspond directly with his son. Ibrahim would also have liked to conduct the campaign differently, to have pushed on to Istanbul and settled the issue once and for all. He was restrained by his father's orders, which he no doubt resented. He was deeply mortified at the Syrian débâcle, which cast a shadow on his reputation as a general in the field, and which meant a waste of ten years of his life and efforts in Syria.⁸ Perhaps on his return to Egypt rancour remained on both sides, and may have been the reason why Abbas, whom the *wali* also despised, was raised to such a position. At the same time one must keep in mind that Abbas was a member of the family and had to be given a position of importance, without regard to his talents or lack of any.

Muhammad Ali, on learning the full extent of his financial insolvency, may well have exploded in rage at what he considered the duplicity of Ibrahim and Sharif in not informing him of the situation earlier, or may even have suspected them of purloining the funds. Whatever the reason, the quarrel was patched up between them.

The following year Ibrahim showed signs of illness that were serious. Throughout his stay in Syria he had complained of rheumatic pains, but it seemed that he had also been afflicted by tuberculosis, a cyst and a serious bout of dysentery. He was sent to Italy to take the waters near Pisa and seized the occasion to tour Europe, where he was lionized both in England and in France. He was fascinated by the thriving industrial plants that he toured, and was more interested in seeing factories than anything else in Europe.

Throughout this trip Ibrahim showed a lively interest in all matters of government as well as industry. Nubar explains that he knew all about industry and was up to date on all the latest progress made in that field. He would happily tour the factories, asking questions and eating bits of bread out of his pocket. Whenever speeches were made at receptions or during meetings with the foreign dignitaries, he had the speeches translated verbatim, and not just the general gist.

The trip seemed to have helped the dysentery but the tuberculosis was too far advanced, and he had taken to spitting blood. Muhammad Ali could see that his son was sick and might not succeed him for long, and so determined to go to Istanbul in 1846 and settle his affairs in a definitive fashion. Peace between the sultan and the *wali* had been crowned in 1842 when the sultan conferred upon him a rank equivalent to that of grand vizier. This act, though an apparent mark of favour, was in fact a means of putting the *wali* in his place as a servant of the Ottoman empire, a vizier not an independent sovereign. The *wali* later told someone that he had gone to Istanbul because, 'Ibrahim is old and sick, Abbas is indolent (*happa*), and then children will rule Egypt. How will they keep Egypt?'⁹ He sought to create bonds between Egypt and the Porte that would prevent his country from falling prey to some foreign power. Muhammad Ali was always obsessed by the fear that Britain would occupy Egypt. He had told Burckhardt his fear in 1816 in Taif, and nothing subsequently allowed him to change his opinion regarding British designs on his country. History was to prove his fears well grounded. When he had been approached on the idea of a Suez canal he had refused to consider such a project because he believed it would incite the occupation of Egypt by Britain, and in this he proved prophetic.

While in Istanbul the aged pasha was well treated, and returned to Egypt feeling more secure about the future of the country. He planned a visit to England for the following year, where, Palmerston – who had once again returned to office – assured him, he would be graciously received. The trip never took place for the silver nitrate his doctors gave him earlier to cure his dysentery was taking its toll and troubled his

faculties, when his fits of lucidity seemed to become rarer. From 1847 the administration of the country was left to Ibrahim, who finally determined to go to Istanbul and ask for his investiture as ruler of Egypt during his father's lifetime because the old gentleman seemed unlikely to regain control of his senses.

In Istanbul the sultan granted Ibrahim's request for investiture. Nubar reported that this was granted easily and with no fuss because an Austrian physician had predicted that Ibrahim would be dead within six months. On the ship returning home Ibrahim succumbed to fever and, during bouts of hallucination, revealed his terror that his father would become lucid and punish him for having dared to seize power. Ibrahim died six months later and was succeeded by his nephew Abbas. The old pasha by then was so sick that he never even knew that his son had died. A few months later he himself died on 2 August 1849 at Alexandria.

British consul Murray described the funeral procession which was met at Bulaq by all the surviving members of the family, with the exception of the new *wali*, Abbas Pasha:

... the ceremonial of the funeral was a most meagre, miserable affair; the Consular body was not invited to attend, and neither the shops nor the Public offices were closed – in short, a general impression prevails that Abbas Pasha has shown a culpable lack of respect for the memory of his illustrious grandfather, in allowing his obsequies to be conducted in so paltry a manner, and in neglecting to attend them in Person.

Murray claimed that the

attachment and veneration of all classes in Egypt for the name of Muhammad Ali are prouder obsequies than any which it was in the power of his successor to confer. The old inhabitants remember and talk of the chaos and anarchy from which he rescued this country; the younger compare his energetic rule with the capricious, vacillating government of his successor; all classes whether Turks, or Arabs, not only feel, but do not hesitate to say openly that the prosperity of Egypt has died with Muhammad Ali ... In truth my Lord, it cannot be denied, that Muhammad Ali, notwithstanding all his faults was a great man.

He went on to say that the *wali*, without any of the advantages of birth or of fortune, had carved his way to power and fame by his 'own indomitable courage, perseverance and sagacity'. When he assumed power he had found an Egypt torn to pieces by feuds and factions, plundered by roving bands of adventurers, its finances and commerce prostrate and life and prosperity in every province at the mercy of the strongest arm; and to redress such disorders among a people who owned no law but force, said Murray, he was obliged occasionally to have recourse to acts of severity and cruelty. Murray commented that the

pasha was not of a cruel nature, and with only a few exceptions the punishments he meted were necessary for his own security and for the maintenance of public peace and, while he carried his love of fame and power to an extreme, 'his ambition was untarnished by avarice, his resentments were hot', 'they speedily passed away'. Murray claimed that he had heard many Egyptians say, 'if Allah would permit me, gladly would I give ten years of my life to add them to that of our old pasha'. Murray explained that whereas Christians in Damascus and Aleppo were not safe from insult and injury, any Englishman might wander all over the Nile valley with as much safety as at 'mid-day in Hyde Park'. He apologized to Palmerston for his reflections on the old pasha, but explained that he could not altogether resist the influence which 'the Pasha's high breeding and winning manners exercised over all who were in habitual intercourse with him, and which stand out in the higher relief as contrasted with the bearing and qualities of his two successors in the Vice-Royalty'.¹⁰

One of the truly imaginative men that Egypt had as a ruler was succeeded by a selection of incompetent men, who, barring Ismail, had little to commend them. Ismail, on the other hand, led the country towards disaster. The rest of Egypt's rulers were content to treat the country as a milch cow, and the Egyptians as serfs on a fief. And yet whether the successors of the pasha were incompetent or not, they had in common with him the fact that they continued to direct the country's economy towards the European world market. That may have been an inevitable current, and neither Egypt nor in fact any other country was able to resist that siren song.

Conclusion

It is the *point faible* of historians that we view events in the light of hindsight, and then pretend to write history *wie es eigentlich gewesen*. Wallerstein has pointed out that all historians write from a contemporary point of view. They write as a result of their interests, and from the angle of their current scholarly perceptions, so that there is no absolute objectivity, only a relative one. Nevertheless, a historian must examine his or her period of historical interest and compare it with the preceding and the succeeding eras in order to determine what changes ensued and the consequences of such changes to the country and to its population.

It has been alleged by some historians that industrialization in Egypt was doomed to failure because the country had little fuel and less mineral resources. Others have pointed out the lack of an internal market as a reason for the ultimate failure of industry. To my mind these are not valid arguments. England had no indigenous cotton and yet built up her industrial revolution on that one commodity. Japan has no fuel yet today she is an industrial giant. Such arguments then do not convince one of the 'inevitable failure' of industrialization, the more so in a country where manpower was plentiful and cheap and where the basic raw materials were grown. If Egypt had enough money with which to import finished goods of a cheap and medium variety from abroad, there certainly was enough money within the country to create an internal market for her own industrial production. That Egyptian workers were not skilled, another reason given for bolstering up the argument of the 'inevitable failure' of Egyptian industry, is equally irrelevant, for skilled workers are not born, they are trained.

All the arguments which have till now been offered to explain that Egyptian industry should have been dismantled were predicated on arguments that were both Eurocentric and colonialist in approach. The arguments assumed that Egyptians were not clever enough to learn technology – only European workers having that capacity, as the consuls were always pointing out – that Egyptians could never become skilled in technology to compete with western workers and production. Today

these arguments do not hold water. We know that the transfer of technology can be done, that Third World countries can produce goods that rival those of the more advanced west. Witness the quantity of industrial centres that have blossomed outside the west and produce commodities sold in the west but produced more cheaply elsewhere. Why did the first essay in Egyptian industry fail, one might well ask?

The reason stems more from external factors than from internal ones, although there were some local ones. It is true that to set up industry demands a tremendous outlay of capital and that after 1840 such capital was less available. It is also equally true that no industry was set up in Europe at that time without protective tariffs also being instituted to sustain that industry until it could survive on its own merits. That advantage was not vouchsafed Egypt. A second concomitant was that the industrialized world needed external markets in order to sell its own goods, for the internal markets were not sufficient, hence the need for informal colonization, which later in the century became formalized by physical military occupation. That second advantage also was not vouchsafed Egypt. The treaty of Balta Liman prevented the *wali* from continuing to protect his infant industries; worse still, it permitted the unchecked influx of cheap western goods. Because aliens could import and export at cheaper rates than the local citizens, and thanks to the Capitulations became immune from local laws, the local markets fell into their hands, and in time were to fall entirely under their control. Whatever colonies Egypt had acquired were stripped from her, thereby diminishing her markets. Whatever other markets existed in the area, to which she could have had access to sell her goods, were no longer operable because of Balta Liman. Her commodities could not become competitive through the higher export and import duties imposed on Egyptian goods by the treaty. Incidentally, the treaty operated in the same fashion among the rest of the Arab territories of the area, and rendered their artisan production equally non-competitive.

Industrialization was doomed to fail in Egypt, not through the shortcomings of the Egyptians, but because of external European pressures which used Ottoman legal control over Egypt to kill off any potential rivalry to their own industrial ventures.

The only industries which might have been doomed to die a natural death were the war-related ones once the army was dismantled. Yet even there there is some doubt as to their doom. Egyptian shipyards could have continued to flourish, as did those of Greece, had the Egyptians been allowed to keep their freedom to manoeuvre on an open market, and had been allowed to keep the commercial links that were encouraged in Greece but removed from Egypt.

Egypt in the reign of Muhammad Ali

When Muhammad Ali and his bureaucracy had embarked on an extensive scheme of exporting raw materials, they had placed a heavy burden on the Egyptian population. By so doing they were following in the footsteps of the *tujjar* and mamluks of the late eighteenth century who discovered that they could make more money through exporting raw materials and importing finished goods rather than the other way round. In that way they could also dominate town and countryside, and keep the artisan population submissive. The same *tujjar* had latched on to Muhammad Ali and boosted him to power. He continued to expand the policy of exporting raw materials, but reversed the trend of the immediate past, in favour of a more distant past, by attempting to export finished products as well and limiting the import of rival finished commodities. This came at the time when Europe needed food to feed its masses – who had been driven off the land and into factories with a consequent diminution in agricultural production – and needed markets for its finished goods. The concept of an international division of labour was thus born to convince or coerce some nations to remain agricultural and so supply food for the industrial world. Those countries that sought to do both were cut down to size, as India and Egypt were.

By granting land to private individuals, to friends and relations, as Muhammad Ali and his government did in Egypt, they unwittingly reinforced the pattern of export of raw materials over the export of finished goods. The *wali* had hoped to sidetrack the effects of Balta Liman by coercing the new private landowners to sell the raw materials to him and to the government; he thus allowed land to become privately owned, or rather conceded the private ownership of land under pressure from his own entourage, having that principle in mind. In this last he failed. The pull of the European market was too strong and the profit motive, which the pasha had helped instil among his own followers, too strong to resist the siren lure of ready cash. Balta Liman once again permitted foreign merchants to buy directly from the landowners and by-pass the government monopolies, which were dismantled. The demands of the open market in the west showed the landowners that instant profit could be made by them as individuals through exporting raw materials. That profit had in the past been diverted into the government's grasp. Greed – or, to be more just, the inducement of profit – added to the terms of Balta Liman, finished off industrialization. Whereas industry cost money and showed little profit at the beginning, and what profit it showed went to the government, agriculture for export showed instant profit which went to the private landowners. Private ownership of land therefore aided in stripping the country of its industrial potential.

A heavy burden had been placed on the Egyptian population in terms of *corvée* labour for digging irrigation canals and public works. It is true that these canals helped increase the land areas of Egypt and allowed the production of new cash crops, but the toll in lives and in disruption of society was tremendous. The fallah may or may not have benefited directly from these public works, but he certainly paid the price that benefited later generations. A new group, or a rising class of fallahin, did benefit from these works, and came to form the nucleus of the native landowning elite when land became privately owned, but the rest of the fallahin were transformed into sharecroppers at best, or wage labourers at worse. The time honoured *hiyaza* of land, to which the fallah traditionally had been entitled, was transformed into *mulk*, and the fallah demoted into a wage labourer. The disruptions occasioned by these public works, which at least directly benefited the population at large, were as nothing compared to the disruptions that affected the fallah when the Suez Canal was built. There the Egyptian worker was more shamelessly exploited by his government and by the French builders of the canal, who had him dig it without providing tools, food or payment. One hundred thousand Egyptians died in a project that was hailed by Europe as a marvel of technology, which it indeed was. But where were all the critics to bemoan the inhumanity of the rulers and the Suez Canal Company then, to decry a project that led to a costly debt which took over three decades to pay off, and to the inevitable occupation of the country?

Muhammad Ali's armies were excoriated by historians for siphoning manpower off the land, thereby diminishing the production of raw materials so necessary for European factories. In spite of all its drawbacks the army did have definite advantages which though underlined when describing armies of other countries, were neglected when it came to the Egyptian army. The army was the one chance the fallah had for vertical mobility, other than joining the ranks of the administration and the ulama. That too was a necessary step in the Egyptianization of the country. Without an Egyptian army the country would always remain at the mercy of mercenaries and foreign troops. Without the artificial need for an army created by wars of expansion and conquest there would never have been an Egyptian army. Consequently there would have been no educational missions, no technical schools set up to train men for various branches of the army, and incidentally to produce doctors and technocrats of various kinds. The army was the great educator and homogenizer then and today, as we can see in most third-world countries and as happened in the case of France, Italy and Germany where peasants were turned into citizens. The Egyptian fallah

who was enrolled in the army learned a lesson of self-identity and of loyalty to a territorial entity. When he defeated the Ottoman army, the army of those masters who had ruled Egypt for three centuries, he felt a wave of pride that showed that he was well on the road to Egyptianization, as when he refused to accept Ottoman prisoners of war as his officers, even when the *wali* and his bureaucracy had not set out to teach that lesson.

Under Muhammad Ali the new administration brought law and order to a society that had been bereft of them for several decades. In so doing it gave an impetus to trade and commerce. While the administration carried out measures that tended to concentrate land in the hands of the wealthy few and so created a latifundist class, it behoves us to point out that that class had existed, *de facto* if not *de jure*, before the advent of the new regime and that the regime had followed the trend set by the *multazimun* of past eras, when convenient to do so. By and large, Muhammad Ali left Egypt generally richer and better governed than he had found it. But these are details that lead one to the inevitable question of what the overall picture of Egypt was after the reign of Muhammad Ali.

The answer to that is that Muhammad Ali had created the structure of a state and the apparatus that goes with it. In most other countries feelings of nationalism are implanted and grow among the population until their self-awareness leads them to break out into movements of nationalism culminating in the creation of a state. The opposite happened in Egypt. All of Muhammad Ali's actions, his moves, planned or accidental, fortuitous or calamitous, aimed at rendering Egypt independent from the Ottoman empire. In order to make that independence possible the *wali* created an apparatus that would allow the state to survive *qua* state, and not as an appendage to an empire. He had to control the land's resources, which were plentiful and susceptible to further development, sufficient to permit him to become an independent monarch. The governor of a mere province would have found Egypt rich enough, but the ruler of a state needs to develop his resources as much as possible, to render the country self-sufficient and capable of expansion on its own merits, not as part of a larger whole. The state first was created, then its existence encouraged and bred feelings of self-identity among the population, which grew until several decades later these feelings blossomed into a national movement in 1882.

The creation of a state saw the simultaneous development of a bureaucracy which raised funds that were invested in an army and a navy – the tools of independence – the development of agriculture and the establishment of a commercial network that stood on its own and

was not part of the Ottoman world market. Unfortunately the *wali* did not realize that by breaking away from one world market he was also destroying that market and making it, and himself, dependent on a new world market, that of Europe. The *wali* needed Europe as a trading partner to replace the Ottomans, so that, should a conflict arise between him and the Ottomans as was inevitable, he would still have a market for his goods. That new partner was to effect his undoing.

In creating the apparatus for the state Muhammad Ali inevitably forced the country to Egyptianize the army and the administration. Yet he still hoped to keep an elite of Ottomans, because he himself psychologically could not make the transition to becoming an Egyptian. It was too late for him, but not so for his son Ibrahim, who determined to become an Egyptian; even when he treated the native population high-handedly he tried to identify with the land and its men. On the other hand, the *wali* thought of himself as an Ottoman, and feared the Egyptianization of his elite. He wanted to keep them intact as an elite, which accounts for his interest in sixteenth-century Ottoman literature. He wanted his men to retain their self-identity as Ottomans and to that end he encouraged interest in Ottoman literature of the golden age. Much in the way that immigrants will cling to the customs of the Old Country they left at the time they emigrated rather than as these customs evolved at a later age, and so become more rigid than the mother country in this respect, so the Ottoman elite in Egypt was encouraged to cling to its Ottoman identity as a cultural identity, even when they were fighting the Ottomans as a political identity. By so doing the new regime differed from the mamluks who had, to a large extent, adopted the identity of the Egyptians, that is, the Islamic-Arab culture, when they came from different and alien milieux. The lesser mamluks had fraternized with the people, even though their elite had not intermarried with them, but they had learned to speak the language and adopted the customs of the Egyptians, even while bringing in customs of their own. The new regime sought to place a distance between itself and the mass of the fallahin and so preserve its own cultural identity. The reason for this is that, unlike the mamluks, for the most part they were not slaves torn from their own roots and therefore forced to find new ones, but were immigrants into a country they sought to exploit but with whom they had not as yet identified. Much like the British raj in India, they were the Turco-Circassian-Albanian raj in Egypt, feeling possessive towards the land as the source of their well-being and new-found authority, but having no sense of identity with it. In so doing they forced the Egyptians into a self-awareness of their own, into a national identity, distinct from that of their rulers.

Egypt in the reign of Muhammad Ali

The use the *wali* made of western technocrats, like the St Simonians, who helped him create a state apparatus, equally aided indirectly in the local reaction towards developing an Egyptian identity. By using aliens to introduce changes in the country, be they administrative or technological, the *wali* highlighted the gap between the rulers and the ruled. By encouraging the native population to learn from the technocrats, he gave them an awareness of self and a sense of achievement that led them to look upon themselves in a positive fashion, the first step towards the development of a national identity.

Thus Muhammad Ali and his new administration inevitably put Egypt on the path of independent statehood and self-recognition as having a separate identity distinct from other Muslims and Ottomans. Legal separation was not to come for nearly another century, and absolute independence was to take longer, but without his efforts it might have taken Egyptians much longer to be able to call Egypt their own.

Notes

1 Egypt under the mamluks

- 1 Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (New York, 1953), p. 40.
- 2 André Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants au Caire au XVIII^e siècle*, 2 vols. (Damascus, 1973-4), 1:196. Much of the information in this chapter is derived from this source.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 1:181.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 1:193, table 25.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 1:174, 1:182.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 1:64, 66.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 2:659-726.
- 8 On *awqaf* see the following: 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti, *'Aja'ib al-Athar fi al-Tarajim wa al-Akhbar*, 4 vols. (Cairo, 1882); 'Ali Barakat, *Tatawwur al-Milkiyya al-Zira'iyya fi Misr wa Atharuh 'ala al-Haraka al-Siyasiyya* (Cairo, 1977); 'Abd al-Rahim 'Abd al-Rahim, *Al-Rif al-Misri fi al-Qarn al-Thamin 'Ashar* (Cairo, 1974); and Yacoub Artin, *La propriété foncière en Egypte* (Cairo, 1883).
- 9 A. A. al-Hitta, *Tarikh al-Zira'a al-Misriyya fi 'ahd Muhammad 'Ali al-Kabir* (Cairo, 1950), p. 64.
- 10 Barakat, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
- 11 al-Hitta, *op. cit.*, p. 64; Barakat, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-15.
- 12 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 4:207.
- 13 *Loc. cit.*
- 14 al-Hitta, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
- 15 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 4:209.
- 16 Barakat, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.
- 17 See the author's article, 'The Political and Economic Functions of the 'Ulama' in the 18th Century', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 16, pts. 2-3 (December, 1973), 130-54.
- 18 'Abd al-Rahim, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
- 19 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 2:7.
- 20 Raymond, *op. cit.*, 1:43.
- 21 Barakat, *op. cit.*, p. 17; al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 4:208-9.
- 22 Raymond, *op. cit.*, 2:405.

- 23 *Ibid.*, 2:721.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 2:722.
- 25 al-Hitta, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
- 26 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 4:207-8.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 1:335.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 1:380.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 1:343.
- 30 Stanford Shaw, *Ottoman Egypt in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), p. 44.
- 31 Raymond, *op. cit.*, 2:485.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 2:401.
- 33 Shaw, *Ottoman Egypt in the Age of the French Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), p. 48.
- 34 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 2:90-1.
- 35 J. Julliany, *Essai sur le commerce de Marseille*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1842), 2:266. According to him, the price for a berat varied from 5 to 6 thousand pounds. See also Albert Hourani, 'The Syrians in Egypt in the 18th and 19th Centuries', *Colloque Internationale sur l'Histoire du Caire* (East Berlin, 1969), p. 283.
- 36 André Raymond, 'Typologie des crises dans les pays Méditerranéens', *Actes des journées d'études Bendor* (Nice, 1977), p. 159.
- 37 G. Douin, 'Le carrosse de Mohamed Bey', *Bulletin de L'Institut d'Egypte*, 8 (1926), pp. 165-84.
- 38 Raymond, *Artisans, op. cit.*, 2:791.
- 39 See al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 2:59, 93, 102, 103, 107-10, 151-2, 157, 159, 161, 189 ff, 258-9, for accounts.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 4:129; and Raymond, *Artisans, op. cit.*, 1:57, 104.
- 41 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 4:129.
- 42 *Ibid.*, 2:239.
- 43 Raymond, 'Typologie', *op. cit.*, p. 162.
- 44 Julliany, *op. cit.*, 3:147.
- 45 Shaw, *French Revolution, op. cit.*, p. 127, gives no source for this information. The amount exported seems highly inflated: cf. p. 232 where Drovetti gives the more likely amount of 100,000 ardabs.
- 46 Raymond, *Artisans, op. cit.*, 2:815.
- 47 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 2:103.
- 48 Raymond, *Artisans, op. cit.*, 2:383 ff; see also M. de Chabrol, 'Essai sur les mœurs des habitants modernes de l'Egypte', in *Description de l'Egypte: état moderne*, 20 vols., 2nd ed. (Paris, 1821), 10, pt 1:516.
- 49 Raymond, *Artisans, op. cit.*, 2:814.
- 50 Raymond, *Typologie, op. cit.*, p. 159.
- 51 Julliany, *op. cit.*, 2:311.
- 52 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 3:20.
- 53 Shaw, *French Revolution, op. cit.*, p. 27.
- 54 Helen Rivlin, *The Agricultural Policy of Muhammad Ali* (Cambridge, Mass., 1961), p. 44.

2 Muhammad Ali the man

- 1 Information obtained from H. H. Prince Abbas Hilmi.
- 2 Information obtained from folder 126, Egyptian State Archives, derived from memo by Ibrahim Pasha.
- 3 Princess Chevikar, *Mon Pays* (Paris, 1933), p. 8.
- 4 Hekekyan Papers, British Museum, Add. MSS 37448-71, 24 vols., 1840-72, 3:156, 215.
- 5 10 Ma'iyya Turki, no. 40, Rabi' I, 1237.
- 6 A. A. Paton, *A History of the Egyptian Revolution*, 2 vols. (London, 1863), 2:165.
- 7 John Morley, *Life of Cobden*, 2 vols. (London, 1908), 1:67.
- 8 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 3:250, probably meaning Ahmad Taher.
- 9 Muhammad Sabry, *L'empire égyptien sous Mohamed-Ali et la question d'orient* (Paris, 1930), p. 24.
- 10 Nicolas Turc, *Chronique d'Egypte, 1798-1804*, Gaston Wiet, ed. & trans. (Cairo, 1950), p. 125; al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 3:228.
- 11 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 3:271.
- 12 Sir John Bowring, 'Report on Egypt and Candia', *Parliamentary Papers* (London: 1840), 21:147.
- 13 F.O. 78/804. Murray to Palmerston, 6 August 1849.
- 14 *Ibid.*

3 A country without a master

- 1 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 3:187 ff.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 3:192, 199.
- 3 Shafik Ghorbal, *The Beginnings of the Egyptian Question and the Rise of Mehmet Ali* (London, 1928), p. 163.
- 4 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 3:201-2. I am referring to the incident in which the Ottomans lured some mamluk beys into their ships, killed some of them and took the rest prisoners. The British forced them to release their prisoners.
- 5 Ghorbal, *op. cit.*, p. 183.
- 6 A. J. Dénain, *Histoire scientifique et militaire de l'expédition française en Egypte, Egypte moderne* (Paris, 1830-6), 9:71-2.
- 7 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 3:238.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 3:244.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 3:240.
- 10 Turc, *op. cit.*, p. 157.
- 11 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 3:249.
- 12 Turc, *op. cit.*, p. 193.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 194.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 238.
- 15 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 3:283.
- 16 Turc, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

- 17 See author's article, 'The Role of the 'Ulama in Egypt during the Early Nineteenth Century', in *Political and Social History in Modern Egypt*, P. M. Holt, ed. (London, 1968), pp. 276-9.
- 18 See Albert Hourani, 'Ottoman Reform and the Politics of the Notables', in *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East*, W. Polk and R. Chambers, eds. (Chicago, 1968), pp. 41 ff.
- 19 Turc, *op. cit.*, p. 298.
- 20 Georges Douin, *Mohamed Aly, pacha du Caire: 1805-1807* (Cairo, 1926), p. 15.
- 21 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 27 and al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 3:329 ff.
- 23 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 4:34.
- 24 Douin, *Mohamed Aly, op. cit.*, p. 35.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p. 36.
- 26 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 3:331, 332-4.
- 27 Douin, *Mohamed Aly, op. cit.*, p. 45.
- 28 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 3:336.
- 29 Douin, *Mohamed Aly, op. cit.*, p. 61.
- 30 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 3:341.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 3:338.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 3:343.
- 33 *Ibid.*, 3:345.
- 34 Douin, *Mohamed Aly, op. cit.*, pp. 106-7; al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 4:11; and Quai D'Orsay, Correspondance consulaire, Alexandria, 1804-July 1805, Tome 17, 30 June 1806.
- 35 Douin, *Mohamed Aly, op. cit.*, p. 110.
- 36 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 4:11-12.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 4:38.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 4:38.

4 Master in his own house

- 1 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 4:46.
- 2 Douin, *Mohamed Aly, op. cit.*, p. 170.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 198.
- 4 F.O. 24/3. Missett to Canning, 1807-10.
- 5 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 4:69; Douin, *Mohamed Aly, op. cit.*, p. 210.
- 6 I Ma'iyya Turki, 1222/1807.
- 7 I Bahr Barra, 11 Ramadan, 1222/1807.
- 8 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 4:95.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 4:101.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 4:204.
- 11 F.O. 24/3, p. 39. P. Anny to London, 1 September 1808.
- 12 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 4:113.
- 13 Edouard Driault, *Mohamed Aly et Napoleon, 1807-1814* (Cairo, 1925), p. 80.

- 14 8 Ma'iyya Turki, 5 Safar 1225/1810.
- 15 Driault, *Mohamed Aly et Napoléon*, *op. cit.*, p. 82.
- 16 Quai d'Orsay, Correspondance consulaire, vol. 26, 17 April 1809.
- 17 Driault, *Mohamed Aly et Napoléon*, *op. cit.*, p. 113.
- 18 1 Ma'iyya Turki, 9 Safar 1226/1811.
- 19 F.O. 24/4, 13 December 1813; Dénain, *Histoire de l'expédition*, *op. cit.*, 2:108.
- 20 F.O. 24/4, 5 January 1815.

5 Family, friends and relations

- 1 7 Ma'iyya Turki, 12 Rabi' Awwal 1236/1820.
- 2 Paton, *op. cit.*, p. 231.
- 3 Amin Sami, *Taqwim al-Nil*, 3 vols. (Cairo, 1936), 2:233.
- 4 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 4:176, 225, 269.
- 5 Sami, *op. cit.*, 2:258.
- 6 Charles Lambert, *Notes sur l'Egypte*, lettre no. 7834, Collection Enfantin, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris.
- 7 Robert Hunter, *Bureaucratic Policies and the Passing of Viceregal Absolutism*, MS, Harvard, 1979, pp. 20-4.
- 8 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 4:74.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 4:116.
- 10 1 Ma'iyya Turki, 1 Muharram 1227/1812.
- 11 10 Ma'iyya Turki, 4 Rabi' Awwal 1237/1821.
- 12 Pierre Crabitès, *Ibrahim of Egypt* (London, 1935), p. 61.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 61.
- 14 Nubar Pasha, *Memoirs*, unpublished MS, p. 53, due to be published in 1983, ed. M. B. Ghali.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 75.
- 16 257 Abdin 1255.
- 17 Quai d'Orsay, *Memoires et documents, l'Egypte, 1778-1861*, vol. 1, 'Etat militaire actuel de l'Egypte', April 1825, presumed to be written by General Boyer; Paton, *op. cit.*, 2:247.
- 18 Paton, *op. cit.*, 2:250.
- 19 Gabriel Enkiri, *Ibrahim Pacha (1789-1848)* (Cairo, 1948), p. 6.
- 20 Sudan, 9 Rabi' II 1236/14 January 1821.
- 21 *Ibid.*
- 22 *Ibid.*
- 23 1 Sudan, 26 Sha'ban 1236/1821. Also 7 Ma'iyya Turki.
- 24 10 Ma'iyya Turki, 21 Muharram 1238/1822.
- 25 19 Ma'iyya Turki, 2 Jamad 'Awwal 1241/1825.
- 26 Ma'iyya Turki, no number, 15 Jamad 'Awwal 1243/1827.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 23 Jamad 'Awwal 1232/1827.
- 28 35 Ma'iyya Turki, Dhu al-Hijja 1243/1828.
- 29 Ma'iyya Turki, no number, 27 Jamad 'Awwal 1243/1827.
- 30 13 Bahr Barra, 30 Sha'ban 1245/1830; also, 30 Shawwal.

- 31 747 Diwan al-Khidiwi Turki, 21 Rabi' II 1244/1828.
- 32 1 Sham, 18 Sha'ban 1247/1832; also, 231 Abdin.
- 33 Mahfadha 240 Abdin, 12 Jamad II 1248/1832.
- 34 60 Ma'iyya Turki, 20 Dhu al-Qi'da 1250/1835.
- 35 79 Ma'iyya Turki, 6 Rajab 1252/1836.
- 36 40 Ma'iyya Turki, 1 Ramadan 1240/1825.
- 37 21 Ma'iyya Turki, 5 Rabi' Thani 1242/1826.
- 38 20 Ma'iyya Turki, 27 Dhu al-Hijja 1245/1830.
- 39 64 Ma'iyya Turki, 6 Shawwal 1251/1836.
- 40 45 Ma'iyya Turki, 3 Rajab 1250/1835; also, Amr Karim, 248.
- 41 66 Ma'iyya Turki, 15 Rabi' Thani 1251/1835.
- 42 76 Ma'iyya Turki, 29 Dhu al-Qi'da 1252/1837.
- 43 88 Ma'iyya Turki, 13 Dhu al-Hijja 1252/1837.
- 44 66 Ma'iyya Turki, 26 Rabi' I 1251/1835.
- 45 *Ibid.*
- 46 258 Abdin; Wathiqat Turki 1-145/28, 21 Sha'ban 1255/1839.
- 47 10 Abdin, 15 Rabi' Thani 1261/1845.
- 48 *Ibid.*, 3 Jamad I 1261/1845.
- 49 3 Abdin, 7 Muharram 1247/1831.
- 50 74 Ma'iyya Turki, 3 Safar 1252/1836.
- 51 50 Ma'iyya Turki, 9 Rajab 1248/1832.
- 52 Nubar Pasha, *Memoirs*, p. 48.
- 53 *Ibid.*, p. 40.
- 54 *Ibid.*, p. 45.
- 55 *Ibid.*, p. 46.
- 56 *Ibid.*, p. 69.
- 57 *Ibid.*, p. 50.
- 58 Hekekyan Papers, British Museum, Add. MSS 37448-71, 24 vols., 1840-72 (hereafter, cited as Hekekyan), 2:11, substantiates that statement.
- 59 Nubar Pasha, *Memoirs*, p. 53.
- 60 Hekekyan, Add. MSS 37449, 2:114.
- 61 *Ibid.*, Add. MSS 37450, 3:8.
- 62 *Ibid.*, 3:133.
- 63 *Ibid.*, 3:104.
- 64 *Ibid.*, 3:135.

6 Internal policies

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- 2 Sami, *op. cit.*, 2:320.
- 3 *Ibid.*; also *al-Waqa'i al-Misriyya*, 30 Jamad 'Akhira 1244/1829.
- 4 F.O. 78/147, 4 April 1826.
- 5 Jean Deny, *Sommaire des archives turques du Caire* (Cairo, 1930), p. 130.
- 6 *Ibid.*, pp. 90 ff.

- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 94.
- 8 A. Talamas, *Recueil de la correspondance de Mohamed Aly, Khédive d'Egypte* (Cairo, 1913), *Egypte* 3, ff. 232-9, 22 July 1933.
- 9 Deny, *op. cit.*, p. 97.
- 10 *Ibid.*, pp. 33-4.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 94.
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- 14 2 Dhawat, 9 Shawwal 1251/1836.
- 15 1 Ma'iyya Arabi.
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- 17 Deny, *op. cit.*, p. 134; Michel-Ange Lancret, 'Mémoire sur les systèmes d'imposition territoriale et sur l'administration des provinces de l'Egypte dans les dernières années du gouvernement des mamlouks', *Description de l'Egypte*, 2nd ed., 20 vols (Paris, 1821), 2:461 ff.
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- 19 Muhammad Aly to Ibrahim Pasha, 5 Sha'ban 1237/1822.
- 20 René Cattaoui, *Le règne de Mohamed Aly d'après les archives russes en Egypte* (Cairo, 1931-6), 2 pt. 2:321-2, 327.
- 21 Deny, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
- 22 Sami, *op. cit.*, 2:352.
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. 349.
- 24 *Lai'hat Zira'at al-Fallah wa tadbir ahkam al-Siyasa bi-qasd al-najah* (Cairo, 1245), pp. 66, 70.
- 25 Sami, *op. cit.*, 2:352 ff.
- 26 3 Ma'iyya Turki, 29 Dhu al-Qi'da 1234/1818-19
- 27 17 Ma'iyya Turki, 12 Rabi' I 1239/1823.
- 28 16 Ma'iyya Turki, 7 Rabi' II 1239/1823.
- 29 278 Shura Qawanin 24.
- 30 6 Abdin, Sha'ban 1251/1836.
- 31 69 Ma'iyya Turki, 15 Ramadan 1251; 18 Ma'iyya Turki, 11 Safar 1240; and al-Hitta, *Tarikh*, *op. cit.*, p. 99.
- 32 al-Hitta, *Tarikh*, *op. cit.*, p. 100; 769 Khidiwi Turki, 23 Rabi' I 1246/1830.
- 33 2 Ma'iyya Arabi, no. 138, p. 81.
- 34 Amr from Muhammad 'Ali to Diwan al-Ruznamji, 27 Rabi' Thani 1256/1840.
- 35 3 Abdin, Muhammad 'Ali to Habib Effendi, Ma'mur al-Diwan, 5 Shawwal 1247/1832.
- 36 3 Bahr Barra, Kikhya to Muhammad 'Ali, 14 Sha'ban 1229/1814.
- 37 2 Ma'iyya 'Arabi, nos. 63, 68, 69, 76, 84, 86 passim.
- 38 29 Ma'iyya Turki, 16 Rajab 1242/1827.
- 39 1 Ma'iyya 'Arabi, 16 Rajab 1253, no. 21, p. 21. Also 3 Ramadan 1253.
- 40 145 Sijil Diwan al-Khidiwi Turki, n.d.
- 41 Barakat, *op. cit.*, p. 231.
- 42 'Abd al-Rahim, *al-Rif al-Misri*, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

- 43 Barakat, *op. cit.*, pp. 233 ff, 265 ff.
- 44 F.O. 78/147. From Salt, 4 April 1826.
- 45 5 Dhawat, 11 Shawwal 1244/1828–29; Bowring, *op. cit.*, p. 6, stated that small-pox desolated whole villages.
- 46 Justin McCarthy, 'Nineteenth-Century Egyptian Population', *Middle East Studies*, 12, 3 (Oct., 1976), p. 17; Sami, *op. cit.*, 2:585, gives the figure of 4,476,440 for the year 1848 (derived from the census of the period) which closely approximates that of McCarthy; while Bowring, *op. cit.*, p. 4, gives 2,500,000. In a more recent study, 'La population de l'Egypte', in *L'Egypte d'aujourd'hui* (Paris, 1977), pp. 157–8, Daniel Panzac gives the figure of 5,000,000. See Rivlin for alternative figures.
- 47 al-Hitta, *Tarikh*, *op. cit.*, p. 88; *Lai'hat Zira'at al-Fallah*, p. 36, 57.
- 48 al-Hitta, *Al-Fallah*, *op. cit.*, p. 98.
- 49 *Ibid.*, p. 91.
- 50 *Ibid.*, p. 95.
- 51 *Ibid.*, p. 95, quoting daftar majmu' umur jina'iyya, Irada Saniyya 13 Rabi' Awwal/1829 1245, p. 93.
- 52 See Barakat for copy of laws.
- 53 Sami, *op. cit.*, 2:238, 504.
- 54 Artin, *op. cit.*, p. 126; Sami, *op. cit.*, 2:266, 306, 420.
- 55 Sami, *op. cit.*, 2:316, 523, 529.
- 56 See Ph.D. dissertation by Judith Tucker, 'Women and the Family in Egypt: 1800–1860' (Harvard, 1981).
- 57 James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of Peasants: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven, Conn., 1976), pp. 4, 7, 194, 231.
- 58 See Barakat, *op. cit.*, pp. 231 ff for more details.
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- 60 728 Diwan Khidiwi Turki, 9 Sha'ban 1235/1820, 1 Sudan.
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- 62 2 Ma'iyya Arabi, p. 182.
- 63 Barakat, *op. cit.*, pp. 265–9; also 748 Diwan Khidiwi Turki, 11 Jamad Akhir, 1244/1829.
- 64 2 Ma'iyya Arabi, no. 34.
- 65 16 Bahr Barra.
- 66 10 Ma'iyya Turki, 1 Dhu al-Qi'da 1237/1822, Muhammad Ali to Ismail.
- 67 3 Bahr Barra, 21 Dhu al-Qi'da 1229/1814, no. 136.
- 68 25 Jamad 'Awwal 1237/17 Feb. 1822, to Ahmad Tahir, *mudir* Girga.
- 69 10 Ma'iyya Turki, 14 Muharram 1238/1822, no. 379, to Muhammad Bey, Nazir Aswan and Farshut.
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- 71 Unpublished MS Arab League, Cairo, n.d.
- 72 1 Sudan, 6 Rajab 1237/1822; also 10 Ma'iyya Turki, no. 186.
- 73 Ernest Lavisse and Alfred Rambaud, *Histoire générale du IV^e siècle à nos jours*, vol. 7, *Le XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1910), p. 221.

- 74 2 Ma'iyya Arabi, Amr to Nazir Qism Thani Fayyum and to Nuzzar Aqşam Wajh Qibli.
- 75 10 Ma'iyya Turki, 11 Jamad Awwal 1238/1822-3.
- 76 449 Ma'iyya Turki, 17 Dhu al-Hijja 1264/1847.
- 77 101 Abhath, 22 Rajab 1252/1836-7.
- 78 20 Ma'iyya Turki, 23 Rabi' II 1241/1825.
- 79 Ma'iyya Turki, 28 Safar 1239/1823.
- 80 16 Ma'iyya Turki, Jamad II 1239/1823.
- 81 234 Abdin, 30 Dhu al-Hijja 1247/1831.
- 82 238 Abdin, 6 Sham, 12 Rabi' II 1248/1833.
- 83 260 Abdin, no. 118, 25 Rajab 1256/1840; also 19 Sham. Bowring, *op. cit.*, p. 52, claims that the fallah reconciled himself to army life under which he was better fed and clothed, and desertion was consequently low.
- 84 F.O. 78/184, 8 January 1829.
- 85 F.O. 78/126, 1824.
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- 87 Driault, *Mohamed Aly, op. cit.*, pp. 194-5.
- 88 Mubarak, *op. cit.*, 12:44.
- 89 Cattaoui, *op. cit.*, 1:51.
- 90 J. A. St. John, *Egypt and Nubia* (London, 1845), pp. 378 ff.
- 91 Felix Mengin, *Histoire sommaire de l'Egypte sous le gouvernement de Mohammed Aly* (Paris, 1839), pp. 5-6.
- 92 See Fred Lawson's article, 'Rural Revolt and Provincial Society in Egypt, 1820-1824', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 13; 2 (1981), pp. 131-53. Lawson sees the events of 1820-4 as forming one continuum.
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- 94 Hekekyan, *op. cit.*, Add. MSS 37450, 3:152-3.
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7 Agricultural changes

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- 2 Ibrahim el-Mouelhy, *Le paysan d'Egypte à travers l'histoire* (Cairo, 1954), p. 44-7.
- 3 Barakat, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

- 4 'Abd al-Rahim, *Al-Rif al-Misri*, *op. cit.*, pp. 109 ff and pp. 267 ff; also el-Mouelhy, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-7.
- 5 'Abd al-Rahim, 'Hazz al-Quhuf', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, pt. 1 (Jan., 1975).
- 6 'Abd al-Rahim, 'Iltizam System in Egypt and Turkey', *Journal of Asian and African Studies* (Tokyo), 14 (1977): 172-3.
- 7 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 4:13, 18, 60, 61, 68; al-Hitta, *Taikh*, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
- 8 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 4:68.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 4:9, 10, 68, 69.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 4:61.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 4:93.
- 12 Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, 'The Role of the 'Ulama', *op. cit.*, pp. 276 ff.
- 13 Barakat, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
- 14 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 4:123.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 4:133.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 4:142.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 4:207.
- 18 Barakat, *op. cit.*, p. 26; compare with Sami, *op. cit.*, 2:266, who gives different figures.
- 19 Sami, *op. cit.*, 2:266; also Artin, *op. cit.*, p. 325.
- 20 Barakat, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
- 21 E. W. Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, 2 vols. (London, 1849), 2:381.
- 22 9 Mahfadh, Diwan Khidiwi, 25 Muharram 1229; also Artin, *op. cit.*, pp. 313 ff.
- 23 Barakat, *op. cit.*, pp. 23, 25.
- 24 *Ibid.*, p. 25.
- 25 al-Hitta, *Tarikh*, *op. cit.*, p. 72; Sami, *op. cit.*, 2:245, 285. I am indebted to Kenneth Cuno for the information regarding *masmuh al-mashayikh*.
- 26 Barakat, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-7, 34.
- 27 17 Ma'iyya Turki, 20 Jamad 'Awwal 1239/1824; also al-Hitta, *op. cit.*, pp. 79 ff.
- 28 Terence Walz reaches the same conclusions regarding Sudan merchants in *The Trade between Egypt and Bilad as-Sudan 1700-1820* (Cairo, 1978).
- 29 Edouard Driault, *Mohamed Aly et Napoléon: 1807-1841* (Cairo, 1925), p. 58.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 67.
- 31 *Ibid.*, p. 73.
- 32 *Ibid.*, p. 75.
- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 82.
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 87.
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 88.
- 36 *Ibid.*, p. 96.
- 37 *Ibid.*, p. 115.
- 38 *Ibid.*, p. 104.

- 39 *Ibid.*, p. 116; Sami, *op. cit.*, 2:232. The Wahhabis, a fundamentalist group arising in the Najd, sought to purify Islamic practices. They occupied the Hijaz and the Holy Cities and defied Ottoman suzerainty.
- 40 Driault, *Mohamed Aly*, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
- 41 *Ibid.*, p. 120.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 136.
- 43 Sami, *op. cit.*, 2:226.
- 44 F.O. 24/4. Misett, July 1811.
- 45 Driault, *Mohamed Aly*, *op. cit.*, pp. 144, 149.
- 46 *Ibid.*, p. 171.
- 47 *Ibid.*, p. 187.
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- 50 Driault, *La formation de l'empire de Mohamed Aly* (Cairo, 1927), p. 272.
- 51 John McGregor, *Commercial Tariffs and Regulations* (London: 1843), 8:254. See Bowring, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.
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- 53 al-Hitta, *Tarikh*, *op. cit.*, p. 12; and Clot-Bey, *Aperçu général sur l'Egypte*, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1840), Arabic translation, n.d., 2:706 ff.
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- 56 1 Ma'iyya Arabi, 1 Sha'ban 1253/1836-7.
- 57 2 Ma'iyya Arabi, 23 Rabi' 'Awwal 1251/1835.
- 58 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 4:301.
- 59 Sami, *op. cit.*, 2:462.
- 60 7 Bahr Barra, 1235/1819.
- 61 1 Ma'iyya Arabi, 16 Rajab.
- 62 Rivlin, *op. cit.*, p. 288.
- 63 al-Hitta, *Tarikh*, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
- 64 al-Waqa'i al-Misriyya, 8 Shawwal 1244/1829; Sami, *op. cit.*, 2:345, 359.
- 65 Rivlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 358-9; compare to Sami *op. cit.*, 2:298 ff and Barakat, *op. cit.*, pp. 306, 420, 532.
- 66 Artin, *op. cit.*, p. 325.
- 67 37 Ma'iyya Turki, 16 Rabi' 'Awwal 1244/1829.
- 68 Sami, *op. cit.*, 2:572 ff.
- 69 *Ibid.*, 2:382; also 6 Ma'iyya Turki, 2 Dhu al-Qi'da 1236/1821.
- 70 Sami, *op. cit.*, 2:379.
- 71 *Ibid.*, 2:284 passim; also *La'ihat Zira'at al-Fallah*, *op. cit.*
- 72 Driault, *Formation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-2.
- 73 F.O. 24/4. Missett, 9 Nov. 1813.
- 74 F.O. 78/103, 6 Nov. 1821.
- 75 Rivlin, *op. cit.*, p. 262, quoting Barnett, F.O. 78/583; compare to Bowring,

- op. cit.*, p. 19, who believes cotton could give 1,000 pts. per faddan, and sugar £32 sterling, p. 23.
- 76 Raymond, *Artisans*, *op. cit.*, 1:186.
- 77 *Loc. cit.*
- 78 1 Ma'iyya Turki, 25 Dhu al-Qi'da 1224.
- 79 9 Ma'iyya Turki, 16 Muharram 1237/1821-2.
- 80 2 Ma'iyya Arabi 1250/1834-5.
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- 88 Ma'iyya Arabi, no number, 19 Shawwal 1250/1834.
- 89 Ma'iyya Arabi, no number, 19 Muharram 1266; also Abhath 101.
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8 Industry and commerce

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- 3 Georges Durand-Viel, *Les campagnes navales de Mohammed Aly et d'Ibrahim* (Paris, 1935), 1:15.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 1:21.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 1:99.
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- 17 Durand-Viel, *op. cit.*, 1:155.
- 18 Sami, *op. cit.*, 2:228.
- 19 Politis, *op. cit.*, 1:185; Durand-Viel, *op. cit.*, 1:158.
- 20 Politis, *op. cit.*, 1:188.
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- 30 *Ibid.*, 4:291.
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- 32 *Ibid.*, p. 89.
- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 99.
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- 39 Radhakamal Mukerjee, *Economic History of India* (Allahabad, 1967), pp. 191-3.
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- 50 Owen, *op. cit.*, p. 47, footnote 2; John Bowring, *op. cit.*, p. 35, and 'Some of the manufactories of the Pacha are prejudicial to the sale of English cotton stuffs.', p. 187.
- 51 *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 35. See also pp. 29-30.
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- 65 Clot-Bey, *op. cit.*, 2:447; McGregor, *op. cit.*, p. 236.
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- 69 Fahmy, *op. cit.*, p. 44; McGregor, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-30.
- 70 Sami, *op. cit.*, 2:368.
- 71 Fahmy, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
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- 99 McGregor, *op. cit.*, p. 222 (footnote); Sami, *op. cit.*, 2:249, 265, 283, 321.
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- 101 Cattaoui, *op. cit.*, 3:255; Douin, *Boisecomte*, *op. cit.*, pp. 125–7; Rivlin, *op. cit.*, p. 329.
- 102 F.O. 78/160, Nov. 28, 1827; Douin, *L'Egypte de 1828–1830*, *op. cit.*, pp. 380–1; Campbell, F.O. 78/408b, 8 July 1840.
- 103 Bowring, *op. cit.*, p. 464.

9 Expansion to what end?

- 1 Driault, *Mohamed Aly et Napoléon*, *op. cit.*, pp. 58, 93.
- 2 1 Ma'iyya Turki, 27 Shawwal 1225/1810.
- 3 A. A. 'Abd al-Rahim, *Al-Dawla al-Su'udiyya al-'Ula* (Cairo, 1969), p. 202.
- 4 Muhammad Ali to the Porte, 1 Ma'iyya Arabi, 23 Rabi' II 1223/July 1808.
- 5 1 Bahr Barra, 11 Dhu al-Qi'da 1225/1810; also from 2 Bahr Barra, 30 Muharram 1226/1811.
- 6 16 Bahr Barra.
- 7 1 Ma'iyya Turki, no. 118, p. 232; 21 Sha'ban 1228/1813, to Katkhoda Bab 'Ali.
- 8 Quai d'Orsay, Correspondance commerciale, vol. 26, 19 April 1811.
- 9 Driault, *Mohamed Aly et Napoléon*, *op. cit.*, p. 183, erroneously calls the pasha of Tripoli Muhammad of Derna – which was the father's name. The army was led by a younger brother, Ahmad.
- 10 F.O. 24/4, 20 June 1812, Secret and Confidential.

- 11 F.O. 24/4. To Waldegrave, 24 Jan. 1811.
- 12 1 Hijaz, 15 Jamad 'Awwal 1227/1812.
- 13 Durand-Viel, *op. cit.*, p. 114.
- 14 Bahr Barra, 28 Dhu al-Hijja 1228/1813.
- 15 al-Jabarti, *op. cit.*, 4:181 ff; 'Abd al-Rahman al-Rafi'i, '*Asr Muhammad 'Ali*' (Cairo: 1930), 2:138 ff; see also F.O. 24/4. From Missett, 13 December 1813.
- 16 John Burckhardt, *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys*, 2 vols. (London, 1831), 2:347.
- 17 W. G. Palgrave, *Narrative of a Year's Journey Through Central and Eastern Arabia* (London: 1866), 2, 54-7.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 2:58-9.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 2:59.
- 20 Sabry, *op. cit.*, p. 59.
- 21 'Abd al-Hamid Batrik, 'Egyptian-Yemani Relations (1819-1840) and Their Implications for British Policy in the Red Sea', in *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt*, P. M. Holt, ed. (London, 1968), p. 282.
- 22 Sabry, *op. cit.*, p. 63; Durand-Viel, *op. cit.*, p. 135.
- 23 Henry Dodwell, *The Founder of Modern Egypt: A Study of Muhammad Ali* (Cambridge, 1931), p. 61.
- 24 Batrik, *op. cit.*, p. 287.
- 25 1 Sudan, 3 Safar 1237/30 Oct. 1821.
- 26 Sabry, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
- 27 7 Ma'iyya Turki, 5 Dhu al-Hijja 1236/1821 and 1 Sudan, *op. cit.*
- 28 Sabry, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
- 29 1 Sudan, 19 Dhu al-Hijja 1236/Sept. 1821.
- 30 From Muhammad Effendi, *chef de cabinet (mudir umur)* of Nejib Effendi, 3 Bahr Barra, 4 Sha'ban 1239/1824.
- 31 10 Bahr Barra, 13 Jamad 1 1241/1825.
- 32 Cattaoui, *op. cit.*, 1:50.
- 33 Politis, *op. cit.*, 1:190.
- 34 *Ibid.*, 1:188.
- 35 *Ibid.*, 1:198.
- 36 Georges Douin, *Navarin, le 6 juillet - 20 Octobre 1827* (Cairo, 1927), p. 3.
- 37 *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- 38 *Loc. cit.*
- 39 Stanley Lane-Poole, *The Life of the Right Honourable Stratford Canning*, 2 vols. (London, 1888), 1:395, 404.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 1:393.
- 41 *Ibid.*, 1:388.
- 42 Bahr Barra, Muhammad Ali to Sadr Azam, n.d.
- 43 Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, 1:406, 29 April 1826.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 1:409, 4 June 1826.
- 45 F.O. 78/147. Salt to Canning, October 1826.
- 46 Sabry, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

- 47 F.O. 78/147. Salt to Canning, 31 August 1826.
- 48 F.O. 78/147. Salt to Canning, 16 September 1826.
- 49 *Ibid.*
- 50 Sabry, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
- 51 *Ibid.*, p. 123.
- 52 *Ibid.*, pp. 132-5.
- 53 F.O. 78/112, 12 Sept. 1822.
- 54 Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, 1:395, 403.
- 55 Douin, *Navarin*, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
- 56 *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- 57 Sabry, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
- 58 F.O. 79/160, 27 August 1827.
- 59 12 Bahr Barra, 14 Rabi' I 1243/6 Oct. 1827; also in Douin, *Navarin*, *op. cit.*, pp. 243-6. Douin erroneously dates it at 1242/1826.
- 60 12 Bahr Barra, Najib Effendi to Muhammad Ali.
- 61 Mutafarriqat, 6 Rabi' II 1243/27 Oct. 1827, Sadr Azam, Muhammad Salim Pasha to Muhammad Ali.
- 62 Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, 1:449.
- 63 *Ibid.*, 1:453.
- 64 Mutafarriqat, 13 Rabi' II 1243/4 Nov. 1827; also Douin, *Navarin*, *op. cit.*, p. 23; C. M. Woodhouse, *The Battle of Navarino* (London, 1965), pp. 112 ff.
- 65 F.O. 78/160.
- 66 Mutafarriqat, 13 Rabi' II 1243/4 Nov. 1827.
- 67 13 Bahr Barra, Muharram 1244/1828.
- 68 12 Bahr Barra, 23 Sha'ban 1243.
- 69 12 Bahr Barra, 25 and 30 Dhu al-Qi'da 1243.
- 70 15 Bahr Barra, n.d.
- 71 16 Bahr Barra, n.d.
- 72 12 Bahr Barra, Jamad I 1243/1827.
- 73 13 Bahr Barra, 30 Muharram 1244/1828.
- 74 Georges Douin, *Mohamed Aly et l'expédition d'Alger, 1821-1830* (Cairo, 1930), p. 6.
- 75 *Ibid.*, p. 37.
- 76 *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- 77 F.O. 78/192. Aberdeen to Barker, 29 January 1830.
- 78 Douin, *Alger*, *op. cit.*, p. 195.
- 79 *Ibid.*, p. ix.
- 80 F.O. 78/192, 8 July 1830.
- 81 Cattaoui, *op. cit.*, 1:354.
- 82 *Ibid.*, 1:352, 356.
- 83 *Ibid.*, 1:363.
- 84 See above chapter 6, p. 108; also F.O. 78/184, 22 September 1829.
- 85 Cattaoui, *op. cit.*, 1:364.
- 86 F.O. 78/184, 1 August 1829.

- 87 F.O. 78/192. Barker to Aberdeen, 30 August 1830.
- 88 *Loc. cit.*
- 89 231 Abdin, 19 Rabi' Awwal 1247/1831.
- 90 210 Abdin and 13 Ma'yya Turki, 14 Muharram 1248/1832.
- 91 234 Abdin, 30 Dhu al-Hijja 1247/1832.
- 92 6 Sham, 9 Rabi' II 1248/1832; also in 238 Abdin.
- 93 17 Bahr Barra 18 Dhu al-Hijja 1247/1832.
- 94 8 Sham, 9 Rajab 1248/1832 or 241 Abdin.
- 95 6 Sham, 9 Rabi' II, 1248/1832 or 238 Abdin.
- 96 18 Sham, 15 Muharram 1256/1840 or 259 Abdin.
- 97 241 Abdin, 23 Rajab 1248/1833.
- 98 210 Abdin, 25 Rajab 1248/1833.
- 99 241 Abdin, 30 Rajab 1248/1832; 8 Sham; see Asad Rustom, *A Calendar of State Papers from the Royal Archives of Egypt Relating to the Affairs of Syria* (Beirut, 1943), p. 204.
- 100 242 Abdin, 5 Sha'ban 1248/1833.
- 101 242 Abdin, no. 71, 8 Sha'ban 1248/1833.
- 102 242 Abdin, no. 41, 4 Sha'ban 1248/1833.
- 103 242 Abdin, 248, 30 Sha'ban 1248/1833.
- 104 *Loc. cit.*
- 105 242 Abdin, no. 155, 19 Sha'ban 1248/1833.
- 106 Douin, *Boislecomte*, p. 1; also see Sabry, *op. cit.*, p. 203.
- 107 Douin, *Boislecomte*, *op. cit.*, p. iii.
- 108 *Ibid.*, p. iv, 22 October 1832.
- 109 *Ibid.*, p. vii, 10 December 1832.
- 110 H. C. F. Bell, *Lord Palmerston* (London, 1936), 1:1831, 17 February 1831.
- 111 243 Abdin, 13 Ramadan 1248/1833. Also 9 Sham.
- 112 Ashley, *op. cit.*, 2:145.
- 113 243 Abdin, 14 Dhu al-Qi'da 1248/1833.
- 114 Dodwell, *op. cit.*, p. 117; F.O. 78/226, 4 February 1833.
- 115 F.O. 78/227. From Campbell, 13 May 1833.
- 116 H. Temperley, 'British Policy Towards Parliamentary Rule and Constitutionalism in Turkey: 1830-1914', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 4 (1933), 2:156.
- 117 F.O. 78/227, 17 May 1833.

10 The undoing: Muhammad Ali and Palmerston

- 1 See Ph.D. dissertation by Linda Schilkowski-Schilcher, 'The Decline of Syrian Localism: The Damascene Notables 1785-1870', Oxford University, 1978. Also forthcoming Ph.D. dissertation by Sherry Vatter, 'Aspects of Socio-Economic History of Damascus, Syria: 1840-1860', U.C.L.A.
- 2 Vatter, *op. cit.*, chap. 3.
- 3 Julliany, *op. cit.*, 2:267.

- 4 *Ibid.*, 2:272.
- 5 Bowring, 'Report on Syria', Parliamentary Papers (1840), vol. 21; also Schilkowski-Schilcher, *op. cit.*, p. 99.
- 6 F. S. Rodkey, 'The Attempt of Briggs and Company to Guide British Policy in the Levant in the Time of Muhammad Aly Pasha, 1821-1841', *Journal of Modern History*, 5, 3 (Sept., 1933), pp. 342-5.
- 7 Harold Temperley, *England and the Near East: The Crimea* (London, 1964), p. 100.
- 8 V. J. Puryear, *International Economics and Diplomacy in the Near East* (Stanford, 1935), p. 109.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 110.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 108.
- 11 Semmel, *op. cit.*, pp. 107 ff.
- 12 D. Southgate, 'The Most English Minister ...' (New York, 1966), p. 144.
- 13 Ridley, *op. cit.*, p. 145.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 100.
- 15 F.O. 195/129, 21 Feb./15 March 1836; Puryear, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
- 16 Rodkey, *The Attempt of Briggs*, *op. cit.*, p. 329.
- 17 F.O. 78/472, 19 December 1834.
- 18 T. Waghorn, *Egypt As It Is* (London, 1838), p. 24.
- 19 F.O. 195/147. Palmerston to Ponsonby, no. 141, 20 July 1838, enclosure no. 21 of 7 July to Colonel Campbell.
- 20 See Sabry, *op. cit.*, chapter 10, pp. 405-29 for full details.
- 21 Henry Lytton Bulwer, *The Life of H. J. Temple, Viscount Palmerston* (London, 1870), 2:257, 263.
- 22 Temperley, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-3.
- 23 E. R. J. Owen, *Cotton and the Egyptian Economy*, p. 57.
- 24 Bulwer, *op. cit.*, 2:285.
- 25 British Museum, H. C. Bulwer Treaty of 1838, 26 May 1838; and Puryear, *op. cit.*, p. 79.
- 26 3 Hansard CIII (1849) 1145-6; Puryear, *op. cit.*, p. 213.
- 27 Temperley, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
- 28 16 Sham, and 257 Abdin, 18 Rabi' Awwal 1255/1839.
- 29 16 Sham, 12 Jamad Awwal 1255/1839.
- 30 Temperley, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-5.
- 31 Crabites, *op. cit.*, p. 84; also Douin, *Navarin*, *op. cit.*, p. 154.
- 32 Bell, *op. cit.*, 1:295.
- 33 Temperley, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
- 34 Rodkey, 'Colonel Campbell's Report', *op. cit.*, 3, no. 1:102.
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 110.
- 36 Ashley, *op. cit.*, 1: p. 391.
- 37 260 Abdin, 25 Jamad Thani.
- 38 Ashley, *op. cit.*, 1:392.
- 39 260 Abdin.
- 40 Rodkey, 'Colonel Campbell's Report', *op. cit.*, pp. 112-14.

II The aftermath

- 1 Correspondance consultative et commerciale, 1833–42, vol. 27, 24 February 1842.
- 2 See Charles Issawi, ed., *The Economic History of the Middle East: 1800–1914* (Chicago, 1966), p. 38, for details of the treaty.
- 3 Correspondance commerciale, Alexandria, 1841–2, vol. 27, 12 October 1842.
- 4 *Loc. cit.*
- 5 Puryear, *op. cit.*, p. 130.
- 6 Sabri, *op. cit.*, p. 581; Sami, *op. cit.*, p. 532; Paton, *op. cit.*, pp. 233 ff; Nubar Pasha, *Memoirs*, p. 31, for various aspects of the incident.
- 7 Nubar Pasha, *Memoirs*, p. 40.
- 8 Paton, *op. cit.*, 2:216.
- 9 Nubar Pasha, *Memoirs*, p. 63.
- 10 F.O. 78/804. Murray to Palmerston, 6 Aug. 1849.

Glossary of Arabic and Turkish terms

- agha* (plur. *aghawat*): in normal usage, a military chief; a chief eunuch
alaja: a type of cloth made from a mixture of silk and cotton
al-amma: the masses
alim (plur. *ulama*): man of religion whose function as scholar, teacher and doctor of the law of Islam conferred considerable prestige and authority
anfar (sing. *nafar*): workers
aqsam see *qism*
arbah: profits, gains
ashraf: see *sharif*
aswaq: see *suq*
athariyya: the peasants' hereditary right to till the soil in return for payment of the land tax
awqaf: see *waqf*
- barrani*: extraordinary taxes
barsim: egyptian clover
bash muawin: chief assistant or chief secretary; also used for an aide-de-camp
berat: a patent sold by a consulate granting extra-territorial rights
beratli: merchant who held a *berat*
bida: an innovation regarded as doctrinally heretical to Islam
binbashi: the rank of major
bur: uncultivated or fallow land
- chorbashi*: a colonel of a janissary regiment
ciftlik (plur. *cafalik*): a farm or agricultural estate granted to members of the royal family in Egypt
- daftar tarabi al-misaha*: registers of land cadastre
daha: political finesse
daira: an estate
defterdar (Ottoman) *daftardar* (Egyptian): the director of the financial administration of province
derebey: literally 'valley lord'; local feudal dynast who established petty principalities in rural areas of Anatolia

Glossary of Arabic and Turkish terms

diwan: a council, a ministry
diwan al-bahariyya: the ministry of the navy
diwan al-fabrikat: the ministry of industry
diwan al-jihadiyya: the ministry of war
diwan al-khidiwi: the council of the khedive; also the treasury
diwan al-madaris: the ministry of education
diwan al-maliyya al-misriyya: a centralized financial ministry organized after 1844 and under the supervision of a *nazir*
diwan al-taftish: the ministry of inspection which handled the reports of government inspectors and which had the power to issue regulations, circulars and state decisions
diwan effendi: the head of the council of state
dura: maize or millet

effendi (plur. *effendiya*): Turkish title (*affandi* in Arabic)
eyalet: an administrative unit or division of the Ottoman empire

faiz: the profit or yield obtained from an *iltizam* regarded as the *multazim*'s share
fallah (plur. *fallahin*): peasant
fatwa: an authoritative opinion regarding points of Islamic law issued by a *mufti* or jurisconsult
firda: in general a poll- or head-tax on muslims; also a forced loan; a new tax imposed upon the peasants in 1822
firman: an imperial edict, order or command

gharuqa: a form of land mortgage

hakim (plur. *hukkam*) *khutt*: the chief of an administrative district
haqqaniyya: the high court of justice
hayif: crops that failed
hiyaza: usufructuary right over land
hukkam: see *hakim*

ibadiyya (plur. *ibadiyyat*): originally, rural land not included in the cadastre; later came to mean an estate
ijma: in general, consensus or agreement; also the consensus of authorities regarding a legal question
iltizam (plur. *iltizamat*): a rural tax farm
iqlim: an administrative district or province
iqta (plur. *iqtaat*): a grant of urban real estate, rural land or other forms of wealth which was held as a tax farm in remuneration for services, usually military, rendered to the central government
irsaliyya: the annual tribute furnished by Egypt to the Ottoman sultan's private purse

janissaries: an elite corps of Turkish infantry

jīsr: a dike

jizya: a poll tax imposed on minorities

jund (plur. *junud*): soldiers; the army

jurnal (plur. *jurnalat*): a report

kafr: a small village or hamlet

kashf (plur. *kushufat*): a report, account

kashif (plur. *kushaf*): the local agent of the government in provincial areas

kathoda or *kikhya*: a steward or deputy; frequently a lieutenant

kharaj: a tax on land

khawli: an overseer or supervisor

khazina: the treasury

khedive: title given to a ruler

kikhya: see *kathoda*

kilala: tax assigned collectively to an entire village

kushufat (sing. *kashf*): a report, account

maiyya saniyya: the cabinet established under Muhammad Ali; literal meaning 'vice-royal suite'

maiyya saniyya arabi: one of two branches of the cabinet responsible for handling administrative documents and communications written in Arabic

maiyya saniyya turki: the branch of the cabinet responsible for handling administrative documents and communications written in Turkish

majlis (plur. *majalis*): an assembly

majlis umum/majlis ali: a general assembly convened annually and composed of leading notables and dignitaries, such as *umad*, *shaikhs*, members of the *ulama*, etc.

mal: a general term for a tax

mal al-hurr: a land tax paid by the fallah to the *multazim*

mamluk: originally, an elite corps of Turkic slave-soldiers; in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Egypt, the mamluks formed a semi-feudal military oligarchy whose wealth and power was based upon their holding of *iltizamat*

mamsuha: surveyed land

mamur (plur. *mamurun*): the head of a sub-province

mamuriyya: a sub-province

masmuh al-masatib: land granted to the village *umda* to defray the costs of providing shelter and hospitality to government officials or travellers

masmuh al-mashayikh: land exempted from taxation and granted to members of the *ulama* or to village *shaikhs*

masmuh al-urban: land exempted from taxation and granted to bedouin chiefs

mek: ruler

miralay: a colonel

miri: a land tax

muawin (plur. *muawimun*): an aide or assistant

Glossary of Arabic and Turkish terms

- mubashir*: a supervisor
mudaf: an extra-ordinary tax
mudir (plur. *mudiriyyun*): a provincial governor or the head of a department
mudiriyya: a province headed by a *mudir*
mufti: a Muslim jurisconsult whose chief function is to give legal opinions
mulk: property, possession
multazim (plur. *multazimun*): the holder of an *iltizam*; a tax farmer
murattab (plur. *murattabat*): an emolument or allocation
mustabhara: flooded land
mutaahid: a holder of an *uhda* (see below)
muwadhaf (plur. *mudwadhafun*): bureaucrat or state functionary
- nabut*: a stave
nahiya (plur. *nawahi*): a district or canton
naqib al-ashraf: an urban official whose function was to act as registrar of those claiming descent from the Prophet; the marshal of the notables
nawahi: see *nahiya*
nazir (plur. *nuzzar*): a supervisor
nizam jadid (Arabic) *nizam-i-jedid* (Turkish): in Turkey, a new model army organized to replace the janissaries; in Egypt, a newly reorganized model army
nuzzar: see *nazir*
- ojak* (plur. *ojakat*): an Ottoman regiment
- pashalik*: the region administered by a pasha
- qadi*: a Muslim judge or magistrate
qaim maqam: an administrative official at the head of an administrative district
qalam: a bureau of a ministry
qantara: a dam or barrage
qism (plur. *aqşam*): a subdivision of one of the 14 governorates established by Muhammad Ali and headed by a *kashif*
- rashwa*: a bribe
rizqa: lands endowed for charitable purposes; a *waqf*
rukhsa: a written document or permit
ruzname: a bureau of accounting and financial control responsible for accounts of daily revenues and expenditures and the compilation of monthly and yearly reports
ruznamji: the head of a *ruzname* responsible for assessing and collecting taxes
- sadr azam*: the grand vizier
Said: Upper Egypt
saifi: summer crops

sancak beys: governors of sanjak

sanjak: an administrative district; a subdivision of a vilayet

saqiya (plur. *sawaqi*): a waterwheel used in irrigation

sarrafi: a moneychanger; banker or business manager; an accountant

sawaqi: see *saqiya*

ser asker: the commander-in-chief of the army

serchesme: an officer in the Ottoman army commissioned to raise irregular troops; a major

shahbandar al-tujjar: the head of the guild of merchants in Egypt

shaikh: a village elder; a minor notable; leader of a sufi *tariqa* (head of a mystical order) or director of a *zawiya* (establishment pertaining to a mystical order)

shaikh al-balad (plur. *shuyukh al-balad*): a village headman

sharaqi: unirrigated lands not reached by the Nile floods

sharia: the revealed or canonical law of Islam

sharif (plur. *ashraf*): a notable, a reputed descendant of the Prophet Muhammad

shawush: a guard

shitwi: crops planted in winter and harvested in early spring

shura al-muawana: another term to designate the maiyya saniyya employed between 1833-44

sijill (plur. *sijillat*): a register or record

sijill isqat al-qura: a register established in 1728 to identify the holders of *iltizamat* who had defaulted in payment of the land tax

sufi order: religious brotherhoods or confraternities largely based upon a mystical conception of Islam

suq (plur. *aswaq*): a market or bazaar

sura: a chapter of the Quran

tadhkara makhtuma: a stamped certificate

tajir (plur. *tujjar*): a merchant or trader

tamwil: financing

tarbush: a fez or skullcap

tasarruf: use of land

tira: a canal

tujjar (see *tajir*)

uhda (plur. *uhad*): a new form of land tenure established by Muhammad Ali in the 1830s which resembled the old *iltizam* system. Under the new system of tenure, affluent *umad* or village shaikhs assumed the tax liabilities of lands in villages which had fallen in arrears and were responsible for seeing that all available land was under cultivation

ulama: see *alim*

umda (plur. *umad*): the headman of a village

umad: see *umda*

umma: the Muslim community

Glossary of Arabic and Turkish terms

usya: a piece of land granted to a *multazim* in remuneration for tax-collecting services

wajba: a hospitality tax

wali: a governor of a province

waqf: land or other forms of wealth alienated as mortmain for a religious bequest, or entailed in favour of one's family members

warsha (plur. *wurash*): a workshop; an office

wurash: see *warsha*

yuzbashi: a captain

zimam: the land or acreage belonging to a village

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